

another aspect of the idea of sealing: it can mean that part of the import of God's message will not be available to its readers until near the time to which the predictions refer. The promise had already been given that at a future time many would discover new truth while going back and forth through the sacred writings (v. 4). These words suggest that a vital part of the meaning of the words will not be fully understood until the time of their fulfillment is near.⁶ For the present it is closed up and sealed.

After these preliminary words the messenger answers Daniel's question. It is reasonable to expect that the next three verses will deal with the other crisis -- the one caused by Antiochus' attempt to destroy the Jewish religion. Verse 10 describes the effect of the persecution on two classes of people, repeating a part of the prediction in 11:31-35 about the crisis caused by Antiochus. The wise "will be purified, made spotless and refined." This repeats the promise given at 11:35, using the same three Hebrew words, though in a slightly different order. The wicked, however, will continue to be wicked and will not understand.

The two predictions in chapter 12 should be taken as referring to two different crises.

It is easy to fit the statements in verses 10-12 with the known facts about the attempt of Antiochus to destroy the Jewish religion, but none of the known facts about the history of that time correspond to the events predicted in verse 7. Holders of the Maccabean view say that verse 7 and all the other predictions that do not fit with the history of Antiochus merely represent the guesses and hopes of the unknown writer, but we who consider the book to be divinely inspired, free from error, and written by a man who lived in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, believe that the book contains predictions about two crises that should not be confused, and that one of these crises, the one involving Antichrist, has not yet occurred.

It is disappointing, however, to find evangelical writers making a mistake similar to that of those who hold the Maccabean viewpoint, by trying to find in every passage a reference to the crisis that will be produced by