

“Seal the Book”

Daniel 12:4-13

Hello friend and welcome to *Hope for Today*. My name is J. Mark Horst; I’m your friend and Bible teacher. The program you’re listening to is produced by Heralds of Hope, an international Gospel radio and literature ministry. Thousands are tuning in each week to receive spiritual nourishment and blessing.

You are listening to this broadcast in English, but we also broadcast in 21 other languages to some of the most unreached areas of the world. Places like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and more.

A listener from Egypt responded to our Arabic language broadcasts like this; I thank you from all of my heart because you are a blessing to many. Thank you for helping us Christians to stay on the right path. May the Lord bless this ministry.

And a listener from Yemen responded this way; How can I be a Christian? When I listened to your program, I felt a strange peace in me, hope shined in my life while I felt all are hopeless. Tell me please how? What a blessing to know that lives are being transformed by the power of the Gospel!

On today’s broadcast of *Hope for Today* we begin our final study from the book of Daniel. Our study is titled “Seal the Book.” Our text is Daniel 12:4 through 13. Listen carefully as I read this portion of Scripture. That’s **Daniel 12:4 to 13**.

What’s the value of a seal? I guess it depends what kind of seal you’re talking about. And no, I don’t have in mind the semi-aquatic marine mammal. I’m thinking of other kinds of seals. Like, a seal that’s used in the preservation of something. The seal keeps out contamination or helps maintain flavor and freshness. Without seals much of our food would spoil before we could use it. Liquids as varied as shampoo or motor oil could be contaminated with unknown, harmful substances. Seals are very important on medicines to show they’ve not been tampered with.

Another kind of seal is a symbol used to identify a place of position or authority. It also indicates ownership. Ancient kings had seals that left an impression in wax. Before the days of envelope glue, the wax would seal the document and the official seal would leave its unique imprint in the warm wax. If the seal was tampered with, it was immediately noticeable. And if you were caught messing with that seal you were in big trouble.

The Scriptures talk about seals too. Sometimes, they're referred to as signet rings, as in Genesis 38:18 and 41:42. In our earlier study from Daniel chapter 6, we learned that the king sealed the covering of the lion's den with his seal and the seal of his nobles. That meant his decision wasn't to be tampered with. In Job 14:17 Job refers to his transgressions as being sealed up or preserved in a bag. The Holy Spirit is spoken of as a seal – a seal of God's approval, Second Timothy 2:19 and Ephesians 1:13.

Today, we're continuing our study in the book of Daniel, chapter twelve. In our previous study we covered the first three verses of this chapter. Now, we're going to conclude our study of Daniel by looking at chapter twelve, verses 4 to 13. And the title of our study is "Seal the Book."

So, listen carefully as I read the text, **Daniel 12:4 to 13.**

In this text we discover several important REASONS for the command to "Seal the Book."

The First REASON is,

For Authentication

As our text opens, Daniel is instructed to *shut up the words and seal the book even to the time of the end*. In the ancient Near East, documents were not so easily produced as they are today. In most cases the official document was copied, so there was a copy available for reference. The original was carefully sealed for both authentication and preservation. Commentator Gleason Archer reminds us that (and I quote) "it was customary for the scribe who recorded important documents, such as contractual promises, to run his cylinder-seal across the bottom of the page to guarantee authenticity."¹

By sealing this document, Daniel was certifying all that had been revealed to him was true and would take place just as God through the angelic messengers had promised him. Remember the words of Daniel 8:26. "*And the vision of the evenings and mornings which was told is true; Therefore, seal up the vision, for it refers to many days in the future.*"

We've noted before in our study that some skeptics deny the authenticity of Daniel's prophecy. But they don't seem to have similar problems with the narrative in the early chapters. Genuine Christ-followers accept the reality of divine inspiration and revelation. They understand that God in His sovereignty knows the future ending of human history just as well as he knows the

¹ Archer, "Daniel," p. 153, 154

historical beginning. As I've stated before, the endorsement of Daniel's writings by Jesus Himself, in Matthew 24:15, should certainly lay to rest any questions about authentication.

The Next REASON (for sealing the book) is,

For Preservation

As I mentioned in the introduction, one purpose of sealing things is to preserve them. At the moment, you don't need what is being sealed, but you anticipate wanting to use what is preserved at a future time. In verse 4, Daniel was told to carefully preserve this message, especially for the benefit of those who would experience "the time of the end." The end of this chapter identifies that time as the last half of the Great Tribulation. 2500 years have passed since Daniel received these prophecies. But they are more relevant today than ever before!

When we get near the end of the text, Daniel confesses that he is bewildered by what has been revealed to him. Some of the things he saw in his vision did not make sense to him at that time in human history. In fact, we need to look carefully at the end of verse 4, because the messenger tells Daniel that *many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase*.

I have heard preachers and teachers say that this refers to our time with its ease of global travel and the explosion of access to knowledge. But in the context, the search for knowledge seems to be the focus. In the original Hebrew, this is literally *the knowledge*, that is, a specific knowledge - the understanding of this long prophecy. People will try to understand the meaning of these prophecies of the last days.

James Montgomery interprets this phrase in the light of Amos 8:11 and 12 which says, "*Behold, the days are coming,*" says the Lord GOD, "*That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD, but shall not find it.*" The context of these verses makes it clear that Amos is describing conditions that will exist at the time of the end.

The verb translated as *wander* seems to describe a vain travelling about in order to discover knowledge.² In the immediate future of Daniel's time, attempts to understand the message will be futile. But, in the time of the end, when these prophecies begin to unfold, additional understanding will be given. It's possible, even likely, that you and I, today, from our vantage point in time have

² Young, Edward; p. 258

a better understanding of these prophecies than a reader from the 6th century BC. And it's just as possible that those who live in the years immediately preceding this time will understand it better and more fully than we do!

Which brings us to the final reason for the command to seal the book.

But that final REASON will need to wait until next time because we're almost out of time for today's broadcast. Lord willing, we'll be back in one week to continue this study. If the meantime, if you'd like an audio CD or a printed copy of this complete teaching, just request it by its title, "Seal the Book."

The quickest way for you to contact me is to send an e-mail to mail@heraldsofhope.org. That e-mail address is mail@heraldsofhope.org. Or you may write to *Hope for Today*, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Remember, you can request a printed manuscript or an audio CD of this teaching, "Seal the Book." I'd be happy to send one to you.

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Now friend, I urge you to tune in next week as we continue our study, "Seal the Book." And until then, keep looking for that blessed HOPE.