

What does Daniel 12:11 mean?

"...and from that time the daily sacrifice is taken away..." - many people believe this means that Israel will start animal sacrifices again. However, after reading Hebrews 13:15 where it talks about the "sacrifice of praise to God, the fruit of our lips", I was wondering if the sacrifice that is taken away is talking about taking prayer away and not taking animal sacrifice away. What are your thoughts?

Thank very much for your question. Because Daniel is filled with symbolism, we must be careful not to over do our interpretation. The symbolism must only be interpreted in the light of what this passage says or in the light of what other passages, which refer directly to these symbols, say.

What does Daniel 12:13 mean? Let us begin with the context in Dan 12:5-13.

In verse 5, Daniel asks the question which sets the limitations of the answer:

5 Then I, Daniel, looked, and there before me stood two others, one on this bank of the river and one on the opposite bank. 6 One of them said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?"

This question limits our inquiry to how long: "How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?"

The answer to the question of when is given in verse 7:

7 The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, **"It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed."**

When all these things will be completed is the answer.

8 I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, "My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?"

9 He replied, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. 10 Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.

Although the specific time was closed and sealed to Daniel, the lord replied and gave the time of the opening: "... the time of the end, 10 Many will be purified, made spotless and refined . . . " Daniel was left, by these words, in the same predicament as the other prophets. According to Peter in 1 Peter 1:10-12:

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, 11 trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

Not even the rulers knew what was to come, according to Paul in 1 Cor 2:6-10:

6 We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 However, as it is written:

"No eye has seen,
no ear has heard,
no mind has conceived
what God has prepared for those who love him" –

10 but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.

In verse 11, two symbolic and indefinite numbers are given for the exact time. The literal time of the numbers "is closed up and sealed until the end of time," according to verse 9:

11 "From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. 12 Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.

Even though the number of days is for an indefinite period, there are markers which tell us of the events that occur before the beginning, during, and at the end of the time. The count begins "From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished" there will be 1,290 days until the "abomination that causes desolation." Although these events are hidden from the Old Testament prophets, the Spirit makes them clear to us in the New Testament.

The time that the daily sacrifice is abolished. This time is clearly the time when Jesus died on the cross. In Matt 27:50-51, his death abolished the law of the temple and the sacrifices that went with it:

50 And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

Paul confirmed in Col 2:13-14 that this is the exact time that the Law and its sacrifices were nailed to the cross: "He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross." Paul further explained what happened, using the very word *abolished* in Eph 2:14-17:

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

Regardless of whatever difficulty the Jews had in maintaining the daily sacrifice, during the apocryphal period, the absolute end of the daily sacrifice and the beginning of the time of the 1,290 days is marked by the death of Christ on the cross.

The time of the abomination of desolation. This time at the end of the figurative 1,290 days receives a full explanation by the Lord in Matt 24. In Matt 24:1-3, the disciples asked Jesus two questions in response to his saying, "'Do you see all these things?' he asked. 'I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.'" He had just shown them the temple and they followed with verse 3: "3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. 'Tell us,' they said, 'when will this happen, and

what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" Jesus proceeded to answer the first question about the destruction of the temple and in Matt 24:15-16 concluded:

15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel – let the reader understand – 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Historically, we know that the temple and Jerusalem were destroyed c. AD 70. Jesus also makes sure that they know that this is not about his coming, which he discusses in Matt 24:26-50: If anyone says that the abomination of desolation is the coming of Christ, they are wrong, as Matt 24:23-25, clearly teaches:

23 At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. 24 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect – if that were possible. 25 See, I have told you ahead of time.

The end of days. Daniel offers a last indefinite time with a definite end – 1335 days in verse 12: "Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days." The end of these days is given in verse 13: "13 As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance." The "end of these days" looks past the cross and the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, until the last day when Daniel and the faithful will rise to eternal life.

Now back to the rest your question:

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The end of the sacrifices clearly references the sacrifices, about which Daniel and the Hebrew writer wrote, which were commanded under the Old Testament. Heb 13:11-14 teaches that we are outside the gate and the Most Holy Place of the Old Testament:

11 The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. 12 And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. 13 Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. 14 For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are **looking for the city that is to come.**

Here we have Jesus as our sacrifice, but we are looking for an eternal city. In the meantime we continually offer a sacrifice of praise spoken of in verse 15:

15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess his name. 16 And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

The sacrifice of praise is not prayer, as your question suggests. It is explicit that the sacrifice of praise is "the fruit of lips that confess his name." Doing good and sharing with others are also called sacrifices. These sacrifices will continue until we enter that city that is come. We are, as Christians, now come unto that city, according to Heb 12:22-24:

22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God,

the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

This city is the end of Daniel's prophecy in Dan 12:13, and this city is the end of the Hebrew writer's conclusion in Heb 13:14. Rev 21:2-4 describes this end to the prophecies:

2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."