

Mid Week • Daniel 11:33-12:13

INTRODUCTION

We had to leave off in our study last week at v. 29 of ch. 11.

Then this last Sunday we looked at vs. 29-32 which tells us about Antiochus Epiphanes campaign of terror against the Jews and the temple as he tried to force them into accepting Greek culture and religion.

Antiochus had been thwarted in his attempt to invade Egypt when the Romans, who had recently allied themselves with Egypt, gave Antiochus an ultimatum. Antiochus knew he couldn't take on the Roman army or fleet and returned to his land frustrated and humiliated.

As he passed through Israel, he stopped in Jerusalem and vented his rage on the Jews who opposed him.

He replaced the high priest with a lackey who would do his bidding, ended the daily sacrifices, erected a statue to Zeus in the courtyard of the temple, and offered a pig on the altar.

Then he issued a decree prohibiting the Jews from observing many of the commands of the Mosaic Law, like observing the Sabbath, circumcising their children, celebrating the annual feasts and reading their scriptures.

In fact, Antiochus engaged in a campaign of scroll burning, rounding up every copy of the law he could find and setting it to fire.

These repressive measures only resulted in alienating the populace and though many Jews did go over to Antiochus' side in order to gain position, power, and wealth, the majority hated the Syrian tyrant.

When the Maccabean revolt began at the village of Modin not far from Jerusalem, hundreds, then thousands joined the rebellion till eventually the Syrians were defeated and repulsed from the land.

Jerusalem was recaptured, and the temple was cleansed and restored to its worship of Yahweh.

All of this is foretold in these verses . . .

CHAPTER 11 – CONTINUED . . .

³³And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet *for many days* they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. ³⁴Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. ³⁵And *some* of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify *them*, and make *them* white, *until* the time of the end; because *it is* still for the appointed time.

These verses speak of the terrible battles that would take place between the well-armed Syrians and the poorly armed and ill-trained Jews.

The word “**fall**” in vs. 33 & 34 means “to stumble due to adversity.”

It refers to suffering so severe that it causes people to stagger.

Picture a person who is so beaten up he can't walk straight, that's the idea.

The persecution under Antiochus will be so severe it will cause the faithful to stumble and stagger.

But then assistance will arise for them and they shall rally and be renewed in their strength!

This foretells the Maccabean revolt which rose up at this time to repel the Syrian presence and Greek influence.

The leader of the revolt was named *Judas*.

He was called Maccabeus, meaning “the Hammerer” because many hoped he would be the mallet God would use to crush the Syrians.

Judas’s family went on to become the ruling family in Israel right up through the time of Herod the Great.

Known as the *Hasmoneans*, even during Herod’s life they exerted great power over affairs in Israel and Herod tried to gain legitimacy for his throne by marrying into the Hasmonean dynasty.

It’s at this point that the picture changes and Antiochus Epiphanes, who’s been the subject of the last 15 verses, drops from sight.

A *new* king is introduced, but he’s cut from the same cloth as Antiochus and that’s why these verses run into one another in the prophecy of Daniel.

Virtually all commentators are agreed that the phrase at the end of v. 35 “*until* the time of the end; because *it is* still for the appointed time” points to a conclusion to what has come before and the introduction of something new – so that the king of v. 36 is someone other than Antiochus.

In the first 35 verses of ch. 11, there are 135 *specific* prophecies, all of which have been literally fulfilled from Daniel’s own time right up to the time of the Maccabees some 400 years later.

But with v. 36, we’re introduced to prophecies historians are unable to find specific fulfillment of in past history.

The reason why, is because there is a jump in time from v. 35 to v. 36.

Vs. 36 through the end of chapter 11 look to the future and the career of a character Daniel has encountered repeatedly in his visions – the antichrist.

In his vision and the interpretation the angel gives of it, Antiochus Epiphanes and the antichrist are linked because they work under the same demonic inspiration.

We are to understand Antiochus as a type or picture of the last day’s antichrist. The former sets the scene for the later.

So, what have we learned about Antiochus Epiphanes from these verses?

- He gains his position through deceit and bribery
- He demonstrates brutal military power that comes in alike a flood
- He gains control over other nations through deceit
- When his plans are disappointed, he gets enraged and takes it out on the people of God
- He uses flattery to win popular support
- He attempts to do away with the Word of God and prohibits obedience to the Lord
- He defiles the temple and sets up an abomination so utterly corrupt it is beyond description

➤ Finally, he takes the title, “the Illustrious,” or “Manifested One” because he claims to be god and demands people worship him
These are all portents of what the antichrist will do in the last days.

36 “Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.

This sounds amazingly like what the Apostle Paul writes in 2 Thess. 2 when he says the antichrist will enter in to the temple and declare himself God, demanding that all render worship to him exclusively.

But at that point, the Lord moves to pour out His wrath in holy indignation at this affront to His holiness.

Note what the angel says about the length of the antichrist’s reign –

[he] shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.

The antichrist will indeed prosper and rule, but only for that last 3½ years of the Tribulation, the time of wrath.

When it has been accomplished – his rule comes to a screeching halt and he is thrown in to the Lake of Fire.

37 He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above *them* all. 38 But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things.

The angel tells Daniel that the antichrist will do something unique – he will make a break from the classic pattern of the king seeing himself as the champion of his nation’s god.

Instead, he will make *himself* that god, depending in his own power alone.

Of course, Rev. 13:2 tells us that he gets his power from none other than satan himself.

The phrase, “desire of women” doesn’t mean a desire *for* women, but what women desire.

As always, the way to understand this is to look at it’s context.

Who was the angel speaking to? Daniel. And what would Daniel have understood the desire of women to be?

Every Jewish woman desired to be a mother – and specifically, to be the mother of one specific child – Who? The Messiah!

The antichrist will not only make a break from his own religious heritage, but he will not care about the cumulative hope of mankind – a Redeemer who will come to set mankind free from bondage to sin and death.

Why won’t he care about the Messiah, because he is the anti-messiah!

He claims to BE that Savior.

In the place of all other deities, he shall exalt one – a god of fortresses.

This will be a new god, and one that he will devote himself to worship.

Just who or what is this god of fortresses?

Actually, it's no god at all – and that's why it's such a deviation from what men have done historically.

We've just read that he exalts *himself* above *every* god, so how can he now exalt a god of fortresses?

What the angel is saying is that when the antichrist exalts himself as the only god to worship and honor, he will then pour himself and his activities as a god into one thing – fortresses, meaning military might!

All wealth will be consumed by him in nothing other than accumulating military weaponry and strength.

Why? Because he is bent on world conquest!

And to that end, he amasses both military forces and *assistants* who will help him accomplish his ends.

39 Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance *its* glory; and he shall cause them [meaning his assistants] to rule over many, and divide the land for gain.

Just as many Jews went over to Antiochus' side in his attempts to Hellenize Israel, just so they could gain power and wealth, there will be many people who will gladly worship and serve the antichrist and become part of his system.

The antichrist will reward them with regions to rule.

There will be a forced re-distribution of land and wealth under his reign.

40 “At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm *them*, and pass through.

41 He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. **42** He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. **43** He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians *shall follow* at his heels.

The key for understanding WHEN this takes place is that phrase at the beginning of v. 40, “At the time of the end.”

This is a pointer that this refers to the last of the last days.

The king mentioned in vs. 36-39, the antichrist, is now attacked by a king of the south and a king of the north.

What we are seeing here is a rather feeble and futile attempt by other world rulers in the end times to resist the overwhelming military power of the antichrist.

When he makes his final move to wrest control of the world's economies through the use of the mark described in Revelation 13, and demands the world worship him, there will be those who resist and move to end his arrogance.

The leaders of this will be the kings of the south and north, which in this chapter has meant Egypt, and Syria.

In v. 43, Libya and Ethiopia are linked to Egypt, which means the king of the south leads an alliance of African nations in their attack on the antichrist's forces.

The king of the north refers to Syria, which shall likewise lead an alliance of other northern powers, probably what's left of the Arab nations, as they join with the southern nations to end the antichrist's bid for global control. It's been some 6 or 7 years since the events of Ezekiel 38 & 39, and these northern nations have recovered somewhat from that devastation and now they move to oppose the antichrist's might.

But as they are mobilizing and moving into the area of Israel to confront him, the antichrist comes out of his center in Europe and sweeps down to wipe them out, driving them all the way back and into their territories, where he ravages them and steals their wealth.

Three nations are mentioned in v. 41 as escaping this campaign: Edom, Moab, and Ammon.

These nations comprise the land directly to the East of Israel and are what we would refer to as the nations of Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

It seems that these nations bow out of the alliance with the south and north and as a result the antichrist doesn't molest them.

What's provocative is to realize that what we're reading about here comes *after* the mid-point of the Tribulation when the antichrist has declared himself god in the temple in Jerusalem and the Jews have fled to the wilderness for protection.

(Rev. 12)

The wilderness is to the East of Jerusalem.

It is to Edom and Moab that the Jews have fled and God is protecting them.

That is why these regions escape the antichrist's campaign of conquest.

⁴⁴But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. ⁴⁵And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

After the antichrist wins this great victory over the African and Muslim alliance, there will be only one real power center standing in the way of his complete control of Earth – China.

With China will come the remnant of what's left of Russia.

This eastern invasion is described in Revelation 9 & 16.

The antichrist and his forces will meet this eastern and northern alliance there in the holy land in what we refer to as the Battle of Armageddon.

And it is there that he meets his end!

DANIEL 12

1 “At that time . . .

What time – the time of the end; the time that's being described in vs. 36-45

“At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands *watch* over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, *Even* to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.

After all that the angel has said regarding the last days and the trouble Daniel's

people the Jews will endure, the poor man was crushed.

No wonder he was sick for three weeks when he got this vision!

But as the angel now moves to wrap it up, he gives Daniel words of comfort.

Yeah, things have been tough for Israel through all of ch. 11, but at the end, Michael, that mighty angel who's task it is to protect and defend the Jews will stand up and move on the nation's behalf.

2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

3 Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.

Daniel is assured that there will indeed be a final judgment and all accounts will be settled.

God-rejecters will be punished while the faithful will be rewarded.

In fact, those who have held faith in the Messiah will shine forth like the stars.

4 "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

Because vs. 36-45 of chapter 11 refer to the end of history, Daniel and his immediate readers could not have comprehended all the details of the prophecies given in this book

It would take the continued unfolding of history before people would be able to understand these things.

The angel said that an increased understanding of what Daniel had written would come.

Today we can look back over history and see the significance of what Daniel predicted.

And in **the time of the end** the words of this book that have been sealed or so hard to grasp the meaning of, will be understood by **many** who will seek to gain **knowledge** from it.

This will be in the Tribulation when the things foretold here will become crystal clear in the light of their fulfillment.

5 Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. ⁶And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?"

7 Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that *it shall be* for a time, times, and half a *time*; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these *things* shall be finished.

Okay, here's the scene:

Daniel is by the Tigris River, and he's been seeing and hearing an angel – probably Gabriel as we saw in our study last week.

Apparently this angel was hovering over the river.

Now we learn there were two attendant angels – one on each side of the River.

As these angels have been listening to Gabriel give the interpretation of Daniel's vision, they've become curious and one of them asks, "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders *be?*"

Meaning, "How long a period of time is set for the incredible things of vs. 36-45?"

Gabriel's response comes in the form of a holy and solemn oath – he lifts both hands to heaven as a way to ask heaven itself to bear witness to the surety of his next words.

The events of vs. 36-45 will take a time, times, and a half – meaning a year, 2 years and a half year or 3½ years.

That of course corresponds exactly with the last half of Daniel's 70th 7 mentioned in chapter 9, the last 3½ of the *Great Tribulation*.

The antichrist's reign of terror will be so complete, specially in the Land of Israel, that the Jews will be driven from their land – but then the end comes and the antichrist's power is crushed.

8 Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what *shall be* the end of these *things?*"

9 And he said, "Go *your way*, Daniel, for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end. ¹⁰ Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

Daniel expresses his confusion in all he's seen and heard.

Maybe the angels who attend Gabriel understand, but Daniel is overwhelmed and expresses his consternation.

He asks – "How does all this end?"

What he doesn't realize is that he's seen and heard the end, but it's been too much for him to handle.

So Gabriel tells him to just faithfully record what he's seen and heard.

Then he's to set it aside.

When the time is right, *then* people will understand the words of the prophecy.

Indeed – while a lot of Daniel is difficult to sort out in a casual reading, as we carefully examine these things and compare them with other passages of prophecy, a pretty complete and clear picture of the last days emerges.

Then, as we look at the world scene, we realize that things previous generations of Christians have interpreted only spiritually, are now seen to be coming to pass literally.

No longer do we have to spiritualize the interpretation of prophecy. - Things are coming to pass literally!

The nations foretold would be players in the end times are all set and on the chess board.

The technology needed to accomplish things in the Bible thought just one generation ago to be science fiction are in everyday use today.

Gabriel even warned Daniel that while the wise would see the fulfillment of these things with their own eyes and understand they were fulfilled prophecy,

unbelievers would just shrug it off and deny it.

Perhaps that's happened to you – you've learned about some precise and specific fulfillment of a bible prophecy and when you try to share it with an unbeliever, they look at you like you have a hole in your noodle.

Even in the midst of prophecy being fulfilled, the wicked will keep on in their wickedness while the righteous will look up, knowing their redemption is drawing nigh.

But Daniel has asked a question about the end – so Gabriel gives an answer . . .

11 “And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.

We know from Daniel 9:27, and 2 Thessalonians 2:4 that the antichrist will end the daily sacrifices and set himself up as god in the Holy of holies in the temple at the mid-point of the Tribulation. This is the abomination of desolation.

When he does that, there are 3½ more years on the prophetic clock till the end.

Now, remember, a prophetic year is 360 days long.

So 3½ times 360 = 1260 days.

This same 1260 days is referred to in Rev. 11:2 as 42 months and in v. 3 as 1260 days.

Yet, here the angel says that from the abomination of desolation to the end there will be 1290 days.

Where do the extra 30 days come from?

Before we examine this, let's throw another monkey wrench in there and really mess it up . . .

12 Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.

Okay, so here we add another 45 days on to the 1290 days which is 30 days longer than 3½ years of the last half of the Tribulation.

CONFUSED? I know I am!

Here's what some solid scholars suggest, since the angels doesn't spell it out here.

All we have are days, not what takes place.

But we do know from other passages that after Christ returns to earth, there are some judgments and events that have to be fulfilled.

First of all – after Jesus returns, all the Jews who have been driven from or have fled from Israel will have to be regathered to their homeland.

Bear in mind that one of the purposes of the Millennial reign of Christ is to fulfill all the promises and covenants that God made with Israel.

So they will be regathered from all the nations of the earth and settled in their land, in peace, finally!

Foretold in Ezekiel 20 and other passages, this will take 30 days to accomplish.

So Jesus comes back 1260 days after the abomination of desolation is set up.

30 days later, once all the Jews have been regathered and settled in their land, then the Nation of Israel will be finally realized AS GOD ALWAYS INTENDED IT TO BE.

But then another 45 days are needed – for what?
For the formal beginning of the Millennium.
What has to happen before the Millennium can begin?
The nations have to be judged as we read in Matthew 25.
Only those nations deemed worthy will be allowed to enter the Millennial
Kingdom.
And that’s why the angel says,

“Blessed is he who waits, [or “endures”] and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.”

The only ones who will endure and arrive at the 1335th day are those who pass judgment and are allowed to enter the Millennium.

13 “But you, go *your way* till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.”

The final word is to Daniel *personally*.

As the beloved of the Lord and an old man at that – it was now the end of Daniel’s ministry and time for him to join the faithful as they waited for the Messiah to come and reward them for their faithfulness.

CONCLUSION

It’s an amazing thing to read these words and realize that what Daniel found so hard to grasp because it dealt with things outside his context of experience, are today well within the scope of literal fulfillment.

The Book of Daniel reminds us that God stands outside of time, knows the end from the beginning, and is never surprised or caught off guard.

He has even given us a glimpse of what the future holds so that we might be comforted in knowing that come what may *today* – Tomorrow belongs to the Jesus!