

## Predictions Of Coming Conflicts

(Daniel 11:2-45)

Intro: This morning we resume our study of Daniel chapters 10–12, which you will recall from our introductory study of chapter 10, presents the fourth and final revelation given to Daniel. The prophetic revelations in this final vision were delivered to Daniel by the angel Gabriel, who God sent in response to his prayers for his people and nation. While chapter 10 serves as the introduction to Daniel's final vision, chapter 11 provides a prophetic panorama of the conflicts that would plague the nation of Israel from Daniel's day to the end of time. Chapter 12 concludes this vision with a description of the sufferings associated with the Great Tribulation period, and a prediction of the resurrection of all the righteous Old Testament saints at the second coming of Christ (Rev. 20:4-6).

**Structure:** Chapter 11 divides into two major sections. The first section, verses 2-35, present a remarkable section of prophecy detailing the major rulers of the Persian Empire (v. 2), the Grecian Empire (vv. 3-20), and the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who would inflict horrific persecution upon the people of Israel, until his overthrow by the Maccabees (vv. 21-35). The second section, verses 36-45, propel us *eschatologically* to the end times and detail the career of Antichrist, the last great monster, who will arise during the final seven years of human history, known as the *Tribulation Period*.

It should be further noted that the prophecies in Daniel 11:2-35 presents the most detailed prophecy in the Book of Daniel, and perhaps in the entire Old Testament. A former classmate of mine, Dr. Mark Hitchcock, has determined from his studies of this chapter, that there are some 135 prophecies in these verses, all of which have been fulfilled. The minute details of Daniel's prophecies correspond to roughly three hundred years of history: from 530 to 150 BC. In fact, the correspondence of Daniel's prophecies with the events of history is so precise that unbelieving critics have labeled the book a forgery. They insist that such detailed prophecy is impossible, and adopt the view that the Book of Daniel was written after the events it predicts took place, dating the book to the second century BC.

As Bible believing Christians we believe that the Book of Daniel is an inspired document, in which God reveals details of conflicts that His people Israel would experience before the events occurred. The fact that Daniel predicted these events before they occurred proves that biblical revelation can be as detailed and as specific as God chooses to make it.

Finally, Dr. David Jeremiah has observed that the prophecies in Daniel 11 concern five Gentile rulers who were yet to come. What is more, the names of all five begin with the letter **A**: **A**hasuerus (Persia), **A**lexander (Greece), **A**ntiochus III [the Great] (Seleucid), **A**ntiochus IV Epiphanes (Seleucid), and **A**ntichrist (uncertain).

Let's begin our study this morning by looking at the:

## **I. Predictions Of Past Persecutors Of Israel (11:2-35)**

### **A. Four additional kings of Persia (v. 2)**

2 “And now I will tell you the truth. Behold, three more kings are going to arise in Persia. Then a fourth will gain far more riches than all of them; as soon as he becomes strong through his riches, he will arouse the whole empire against the realm of Greece.”

Gabriel informs Daniel that the present kingdom of Persia, then ruled by Cyrus, would see four more rulers. The first king Cyrus' son, Cambyses, ruled from 521 to 486 BC. He was followed by Pseudo-Smerdis, who ruled only briefly in 522 BC. He was succeeded by Darius the Great who ruled from 521 to 486 BC. Then comes the fourth king, Xerxes, identified in the Book of Esther as Ahasuerus. He ruled from 486 to 465 BC. Ahasuerus was the most powerful, influential, and wealthy of the four. He commanded one of the largest armies in ancient history. It is reported that on one occasion he led an army of over 2 million men against Greece. But he was soundly defeated and eight months later he returned home, broken and beaten.

Ahasuerus was defeated by Alexander the Great, the mighty king whose career is detailed in verses 3-4

### **B. The rise and fall of Alexander the Great (vv. 3-4)**

3 “And a mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases. 4 “But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his own descendants, nor according to his authority which he wielded; for his sovereignty will be uprooted and given to others besides them.”

Alexander you recall ruled the third kingdom represented by the bronze mid-section of Nebuchadnezzar's colossal image of Daniel 2, the winged leopard in Daniel 7, and the conspicuous horn on the male goat in Daniel 8. Alexander was indeed a mighty king, who ruled with great authority. He conquered the known world of his day between 334 and 330 BC. His conquests extended from Greece through Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and the lands of the Medo-Persian Empire, all the way to India. But as soon as he gained control of all these kingdoms his life came to an end.

v. 4 records with amazing accuracy that following Alexander's death, his vast kingdom was broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his own descendants, nor according to his authority which he wielded; for his sovereignty will be uprooted and given to others besides them."

As predicted, a few years after his death, Alexander's kingdom was divided up among his four generals. Cassander took Macedonia and Greece, Lysimachus, Thrace and portions of Asia Minor, Seleucus Syria and Mesopotamia, and Ptolemy Egypt. This division of Alexander's Empire was anticipated through the four heads of the leopard (7:6) and the four conspicuous horns that came up on the male goat after the exceedingly large horn, Alexander the Great, was broken (8:8, 22).

Of special note here is God sovereign intervention, He took the throne away from Alexander the Great and his descendants, and divided it up among his four generals. God once again demonstrates that He was in control, and His purposes would be achieved.

#### C. The ongoing struggles between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids (vv. 5-20)

Beginning with verse 5, the kings of the North and the South are introduced. The Ptolemies who ruled over Egypt, were called "*the kings of the South.*" The Seleucids, ruling over Syria, north of Israel, were called "*the kings of the North.*" This section of Daniel's prophecy (vv. 5-20) is significant because it records with incredible accuracy the continuous conflict that ensued between the Ptolemies in the South and the Seleucids in the North. The fighting between these two empires directly impacted Israel, who being located in between them, found themselves invaded first by one power and then by the other.

I have elected to skip over this section and move on to verses 21-45, which detail the careers of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Antichrist of the Old Testament (vv. 21-35), who foreshadows the future Antichrist of the Tribulation period, whose Satanic career is detailed in verses 36-45.

\* For a detailed explanation of this period of Israel's history, see F.F. Bruce's extensive and easily readable account, *Israel and the Nations* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 120-60.

#### D. The persecutions under Antiochus IV Epiphanes (vv. 21-35)

Verse 21 introduces a major section devoted to the Syrian ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes, previously alluded to as the "little horn" in Daniel chapter 8:9-14, and 23-25. Antiochus, you will recall from our study of Daniel 8 was on the throne from 175 to 164 BC. He reigned in the final days of Syrian power, and experienced Rome's rise to power in the West. From the standpoint of Scripture and the revelation the angel Gabriel gave to Daniel, this was the most important feature of the entire third empire. Antiochus IV, Epiphanes desecration of the Jewish temple and altar, and his bitter persecution of the Jewish people, foreshadows the coming Antichrist.

Antiochus' Syrian domination of Israel was overthrown by a family of brave Jews led by Matthias and his five sons. They became known as the Maccabees, an Aramaic word meaning, "hammer." This term, "hammer," served as a symbol of the ferocity displayed by Matthias's sons, especially Judas. This small band of Jewish patriots brought about Antiochus' demise. Antiochus was actually struck by God, who inflicted him with worms that ate him from the inside out (chap. 8). The temple was finally liberated, cleansed, and rededicated to God by Judas Maccabeus on December 14, 164 BC. The temple's rededication is commemorated annually on December 25<sup>th</sup> with the Feast of Lights or Hanukkah.

## II. Prediction Of The Future Persecutor Of Israel, Antichrist (11:36-45)

These final verses of Daniel 11, 36-45, provide us with one more look at the coming man of sin, the Antichrist. Rather than reading and expounding this passage, for times sake, permit me to point out ten characteristics drawn from these verses that provide insights on Antichrist's future career.

1. He is the willful king: *“he who will do as he pleases”* (v. 36).
2. He will deify himself: *“he will exalt and magnify himself above every god”* (v. 36).
3. He will denounce the God of gods: *“he will speak monstrous things against the God of gods”* (v. 36). This reminds us of the little horn in Daniel 7, who will utter great boasts (v. 11), and speak out against the Most High (v. 25), (cf., Revelation 13:5-6). Paul writes in 2 Thessalonians 2:4: “He opposes and exalts himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, and even sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.”
4. He will prosper for a limited time: *he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done* (v. 36). Dr. Pentecost adds: “Antichrist will become ruler of the world during the time of indignation/wrath, the three and one-half years of the Great Tribulation, but at the end of that period the judgment determined by God will be meted out to him (cf. Dan. 7:11, 26; 9:27; Rev. 19:19-20).” This is another allusion to God’s absolute sovereignty. All that God has decreed will come to pass.
5. He will have no regard for religion: *“And he will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all”* (v. 37).

Antichrist will denounce all gods, and demand to be the sole object of religious worship. Some have concluded that this ruler will be a Jew, since the Old Testament frequently uses the phrase “the God of your fathers” to refer to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exod. 3:15). However, since this individual will be the final ruler of the revived Roman Empire, the little horn of the fourth beast (Dan. 7:8, 24b), he must be a Gentile.

The reference to Antichrist having no desire for women, taken by many to mean that he will be a homosexual; actually means that he will repudiate the messianic hope of Israel. The nation’s Savior and King, Jesus Christ, was born of the seed of woman (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14; Luke 1:26-38). Antichrist will vehemently reject this scriptural truth.

6. He will devote himself to military power: *“But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor him with*

*gold, silver, costly stones, and treasures”* (v. 38). Antichrist will expend enormous amounts of wealth upon military fortifications and programs.

7. He will declare war against foreign powers: *“And he will take action against the strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god; he will give great honor to those who acknowledge him, and he will cause them to rule over the many, and will parcel out land for a price”* (v. 39).

The foreign god Antichrist will depend on may be a reference to Satan. Those who support Antichrist will be put in positions of power, and rewarded with great honor, positions of authority, and the best of the land for a reduced price.

8. He will defend himself, and will defeat many who come against him: *“And at the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen, and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow them, and pass through”* (v. 40).

This two-pronged attack by the king of the South and the king of the North will take place in the last half of the Tribulation period. Israel will be occupied and many Jews will flee, seeking refuge among the Gentile nations (see Rev. 12:14-16). This invasion has no correspondence to historical facts; it is yet future.

*vv. 41-42 Antichrist will establish his base of operations in the Beautiful Land, Israel, and will overthrow the invasion by the king of the South, Egypt, and the king of the North, believed by many to be Russia. Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon will be rescued out of his hand.*

9. He will amass great wealth: *Antichrist will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; and Libyans and Ethiopians will follow at his heels”* (v. 43).
10. He will be defeated, and no one will help him: *“He will come to his end, and no one will help him”* (v. 45). In spite of his Satanic support, Antichrist’s one-world government breaks down, and a great world war ensues. He will come to his end when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in power and

great glory, and throws him and his false prophet alive into the Lake of fire (Rev. 19:20).

**Conclusion:** Taken as a whole, Daniel 11 provides a prophetic panorama of the conflicts that would plague the nation of Israel from Daniel's day to the end of time. Israel's final tormentor, Antichrist, will inflict a time of horrific persecution against the people of God, but he will come to his end when Christ returns at the end of the Tribulation, and throws him alive into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20).

**Story:** I recently read the story of a man from Long Island who satisfied a lifelong dream by purchasing a very expensive barometer. "When he unpacked the instrument, he was dismayed to find that the needle appeared to be stuck, pointing to the section marked "Hurricane." After shaking the barometer quite violently, the man sat down and wrote a scorching letter to the store from which he had purchased the instrument and, on his way to his office in New York the next morning, mailed the protest. That evening he returned to Long Island to find not only the barometer missing, but his house also. The barometer's needle had been right—there was a hurricane! (Quoted in Donald K. Campbell, *Daniel: God's Man In A Secular Society* [Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House, 1988], 169).

### **What should we do?**

1. As we observe the signs of the times we know that God's hurricane of judgment is coming. We need to get busy sharing the good news of God's love and forgiveness with lost people so they can receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
2. We need to get busy spending time in prayer. It was in answer to Daniel's prayers that God sent the angel Gabriel to show him what was going to happen in the near and distant future. Pray that God will use you to bring people to faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. There is nothing more important or more pressing.
3. Ask God where He is working, and how you can be used, and prepare to join Him in His work. Paul reminds us in Ephesians 2:10 that we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Closing prayer:

**Closing Song: *No Longer Slaves***