

“The Time of the End”

Daniel 11:2b-12:4

This portion of the book of Daniel is the final vision/prophecy that Daniel received. Chapter ten was the introduction to this prophecy.

The first 35 verses of chapter eleven were a near-fulfillment prophecy for the children of Israel and are now history for us. From verse 36 to chapter twelve, verse four, is yet future (as most evangelical scholars teach). Some make the division at the end of verse three, but it seems that it is carried through verse four, or at least verse four is a transitional verse, connecting the two sections. “The next section, 11:2-12:4, is divided into two major divisions. The first, 11:2-35, deals with the immediate future, from Darius to Antiochus; and the second, 11:36-12:4, with the far future, the end times just before the second advent of Christ” (Walvoord).

The phrase “the time of the end” is used three times in this text – 11:35, 40; 12:4. It is used one more time in 12:9, as well. The only time the exact phrase is found in the Bible is in the book of Daniel, and all but Dan. 8:17 are found in these two chapters. The phrase, in its simplest use, points to the end of some event or occasion. As with many prophetic terms, it can have a near and far fulfillment, which is the case in its use in 11:35. The near was the end of the suffering of the Israelites under the wicked kings prior to the time of Christ, as well as pointing to the Millennial reign of Christ when all the suffering of the Jews will come to an end. The phrase, as it is used in chapter 12, is pointing to the end of this age, culminating in the Battle of Armageddon and the ushering in of the Millennium.

I. THE HISTORICAL – 11:2B-35

Because of the amount of detail given here, and because of the sheer volume of material that is available on the historical accounts that this portion covers (see John Walvoord's book on Daniel – "Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation" – for a great overview of this time period), we will only give a brief overview of this portion and not study it in the detail we have studied most of the book of Daniel to this point.

One thing to note at the very beginning: this portion has been particularly attacked by skeptics and liberal scholars as to the authenticity of Daniel authorship simply because the details he gives are so accurate that they cannot accept the fact that it was given as a prophecy before it happened so they insist it was written much later by a spurious author, and not Daniel himself. There may not be a prophetic text in the Bible more detailed than this portion (vs. 2-35), demonstrating to us, as believers, that the God we serve is, in fact and truth, omniscient – knowing the beginning from the ending.

A. *Four kings – vs. 2*

The first part of the prophecy of chapter eleven deals with the history of the Persian Empire (which, when given by Daniel, was still future prophecy), and its defeat by Alexander the Great (verses 2-4). "The prophecy came to Daniel in the third year of Cyrus (10:1). The four kings would then be Cambyses (529-522 B.C., not mentioned in the Old Testament), Pseudo-Smerdis (522-521 B.C.), Darius I Hystaspes (521-486 B.C., Ezra 5, 6), and Xerxes I (486-465 B.C., Ezra 4:6)"

(Walvoord – page 256). Dr. Ferguson agrees with this conclusion (specifically of the final one being Xerxes): “Many commentators understand the prophecy to refer to Xerxes...The definiteness of the statements makes this interpretation more likely than the view that the four kings are representative of the Persian Empire” (page 222).

B. “The mighty king” – vs. 3-4

The mighty king of verse three is accepted by most conservatives as being Alexander the Great. “The ‘mighty king...who shall rule with great dominion’ (v. 3) is clearly a reference to the ‘goat’ of chapter 8” (Ferguson – page 223). Dr. Jeffrey makes it clear: “The reference in verse 3 to the ‘mighty king’ refers to Alexander the Great, who conquered the Persian Empire and the whole of the known world in only a dozen years” (page 146).

This kingdom is seen (in verse four) being divided into four parts after the king is broken. Dr. Ferguson describes it this way: “Alexander could not even secure what every father desires, namely, that his children inherit his achievements. His two sons were soon assassinated, and, as we have already seen, his empire passed into the hands of several others (cf. v. 4). Scripture’s judgment of Alexander is that he was a broken horn (Dan. 8:22)” (page 223). Dr. Walvoord draws the same conclusion: “The angel predicts to Daniel that his kingdom shall be broken and divided to the four winds of heaven. This was fulfilled literally in that his kingdom was shattered after his death and not only divided to the four winds, but divided among his four

generals" (page 257). "Cassander was to rule Macedonia, the home kingdom in Greece; Lysimachus was appointed to rule Thrace and Asia Minor; Ptolemy I was to rule Egypt (the Ptolemaic dynasty ruled Egypt for three centuries from 323 to 30 BC); and Seleucus I was to rule the kingdom of Syria and the major portion of the Near East" (Jeffrey – page 146).

C. The war between the north and the south – vs. 5-35

From verse five through verse thirty-five is referred to by Dr. Ferguson in the heading to this section in his book as "The Wars of Northern – and Southern – Aggression" (page 224). Albeit a thought-provoking title, it is fitting for this section. Dr. Walvoord explains: "Beginning in verse 5, the struggle between the various kings of the south, that is Egypt, and the kings of the north, that is Syria, begin and are traced by Daniel in this prophecy to the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.), a period of about 150 years" (page 257).

Dr. Jeffrey says this on the subject:

The complex and rather convoluted history of the conflict between the two major successor kingdoms of Alexander's Greek Empire, Syria and Egypt, is prophetically described in Daniel 11:3–27. Daniel prophesied the unusual and deadly career of the future king of Syria, Antiochus IV (Antiochus Epiphanes), who was symbolized in Daniel's prophecies as the "little horn" (Daniel 8:23–25). Daniel also predicted the defiling of the Jewish Temple by Antiochus

Epiphanes that lasted for precisely three years, from 168 to 165 BC. [page 148]

II. THE PROPHETICAL

As mentioned at the beginning of this text, many authors see a change take place in the prophecy, beginning with verse thirty-six, and they see this section pointing, ultimately, to the final Antichrist at the end of this age. Dr. Ferguson: "A new phase of activity begins at verse 36 and introduces us to probably the most difficult section in chapter 11. The spotlight has been on Antiochus Epiphanes in verses 21–35, but it is widely recognized that the section that follows no longer focuses on him" (page 235). Dr. Jeffrey: "The same Syrian king is the focus of Daniel's vision in Daniel 11:36. However, in verses 36–45, the prophet looks forward in time to the last days and reveals the final Antichrist, the willful king, and his satanic activities during the Tribulation period and ending with his death at the battle of Armageddon" (page 148). Dr. Walvoord: "Beginning with verse 36, a sharp break in the prophecy may be observed, introduced by the expression the time of the end in verse 35. Up to this point, the prophecy dealing with the Persian and Grecian Empires has been fulfilled minutely and with amazing precision. Beginning with verse 36, however, an entirely different situation obtains" [page 270].

A. *"The king" – the "little horn" (of chapter 7) – "the beast" (of Revelation 13) – vs. 36*

1. This verse describes the character of the Antichrist, and how he perceives himself, and how he will be perceived by the world

during the Tribulation. The previous verses, as well as the “little horn” of chapter seven, points to the ancient Roman Empire, which will be revived during the Tribulation.

- a) “Do according to his will” – this is true and allowed by God as He accomplishes His will on the earth in judgment.
- b) “He shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god” – again, this is going to be fulfilled in its detail.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

³ Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

⁴ Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Revelation 13:5

⁵ And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

- c) “And shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods”

(1) *The word for “marvellous” – נִפְלְאוֹת, from פָּלָא – is one that means to be distinguished, to be great, extraordinary – “he will speak great things,” i.e. impious words, most atrocious blasphemy against God*

(GHCLOT).

(2) *"Against the God of gods" – this phrase demonstrates the principle of Scripture that there are other "gods" that people worship, and during the Tribulation (particularly, the last half) the Antichrist will be worshipped as a god because he will demonstrate god-like attributes.*

d) "And shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished"

(1) *This, as does the term "time of the end," and similar terms used throughout the prophetic books, as well as the prophetic portions of the New Testament, points to the predeterminate time that God has set, in His infinite wisdom and will, for the blasphemous works of the "king" to be completed (a time defined for us in both the book of Daniel and Revelation as three and half years).*

(2) *"Till the indignation be accomplished" - עַד-כְּלֵה יֵעַם - "until the punishment sent from God be completed" (GHCLOT).*

e) "For that that is determined shall be done" – the irrevocable will of God, as some put it, will be accomplished, for the set time has already been determined.

[Job 23:13-14](#)

¹³ But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.

¹⁴ For he performeth the thing that is

appointed for me: and many such things are with him.

Psalm 33:10

¹⁰ The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.

Proverbs 19:21

²¹ There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.

Isaiah 46:10

¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

Acts 4:28

²⁸ For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

Revelation 10:7

⁷ But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

Revelation 17:17

¹⁷ For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

B. The religion of the "king" – vs. 37-39

1. There is much similarity here to the "false prophet" of Revelation. Although it is the Antichrist himself here described, it is

nonetheless important that we see the correlation between this prophecy and that of the false prophet in Revelation 13.

Revelation 13:11–18

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

Following are the notes used when we studied that text in Revelation:

- a) This beast is called the false prophet in 19:20

Revelation 19:20

(20) And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

- b) Vs. 11 - This is called "another beast" which is another of the same kind - points to its origin and power

(1) He has "two horns like a lamb" which would conjure up the aspect of the "Lamb that was slain" - he is an imitator of the Messiah (the first beast, the antichrist, is an imitator of Christ as king rather than the suffering Messiah-Redeemer).

- c) He speaks "as a dragon" - showing his authority to speak comes from Satan. Vs. 12 shows that he has equal power as the antichrist, the first beast, and his purpose is to cause all the people of the earth to worship the first beast as god - this shows that he is the head of the Apostate church during the first part of the Tribulation before he takes his true form half way through.

- d) Vs. 13-14 show his power

(1) He does "great wonders," calling fire to

come down from heaven – much like Elijah did.

(2) He deceives mankind by those miracles that he did, and he directs them to make an image of the first beast – an idol.

(3) This idol is the center of worship on earth during the Tribulation – it is referred to three times in this chapter and 7 more times in the book.

e) Vs. 15 shows this image, this idol, was given power to speak and if it wasn't worshipped, it had the power to kill those that refused.

f) Vs. 16-18 is the first mention of "the mark of the beast."

(1) This mark is to be either in their forehead or right hand and all, no matter who they were, had to have it – it was a tattoo, if you would.

(2) Without this mark no one can buy or sell anything.

(3) The mark is, I believe, simply the number 666 – it's a pretty simple declaration for which much has been said.

2. "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers"

a) The word for "God" here is אֱלֹהִים – Elohim – a plural noun that can mean God or gods. The context will dictate which one is correct.

- b) The capitalization of the word "God" here would seem to point to the God of heaven, but this may be an exception to that rule. Most English translations, and most scholars (both conservative and liberal) would write this with a little "g" and translate it as "gods of his father." They do this because the context indicates the Antichrist comes from the revived Roman Empire, and the God of Daniel was not worshipped by them (outside of those in Israel).

"God that his fathers or ancestors had worshipped: That is, he would not be bound or restrained by the religion of his own land, or by any of the usual laws of religion. He would worship any God that he pleased, or none as he pleased. The usual restraints that bind men - the restraints derived from the religion of their ancestors - would in this case be of no avail."
(Barnes)

- c) The most common way for this phrase to be used in the Old Testament to make clear that it was speaking of the God of heaven is written as, "the LORD God of his fathers" (2 Kings 21:22; 2 Chron. 21:10; 28:25; 30:19; 33:12).
- d) This is a verse that is used to support those that teach the Antichrist will be a Jew. This is not out of the question, considering Israel was part of the ancient Roman Empire, but verse 38 seems to point to a Roman world ruler rather than an apostate Jew.
- e) The point here is not necessarily on whether it is the God of heaven, or the gods of the world, but rather it is on the fact that

the Antichrist will have no regard for any god – whether it be the God of heaven or any other god. “[H]e shall set himself free from all religious reverence transmitted from his fathers, from all piety toward the gods in which he had been trained...”

3. “Nor the desire of women”

- a) Much debate has been made on this particular phrase, but considering the simplest explanation is most often the best, it would seem that this simply states that the Antichrist will have no “regard,” not time for, no need for, no natural affection for that of a woman.
- b) Dr. Ferguson – “God has made humanity as male and female, interrelated and interdependent, to reflect His glory. There is nothing more basic to human life, biologically, psychologically, emotionally, and socially, than the male-female distinction-within-unity. The “love of women” (2 Sam. 21:6) is synonymous with deep and lasting affection and devotion. For this the AntiChrist has no regard. It is no surprise that empires that bore some of his traits should be painted in the Book of Daniel as beasts.” [pages 237-238]
- c) Dr. Walvoord gives an alternate view to consider. He does not say that he completely accepts it, considering Daniel gives no further light on the matter, but it is what he thinks is “plausible”:

“Although Daniel is not specific, a plausible explanation of this passage, in the light of Daniel's Jewish background, is that this expression, the desire of women, is the natural desire of Jewish women to become

the mother of the promised Messiah, the seed of the woman promised in Genesis 3:15. The expression then becomes a symbol of the Messianic hope in general.”
[page 274]

- d) Staying within the context here, it would seem that this is a simplistic way to show that the Antichrist will defy everything that is holy – including the sanctity of marriage.

4. “Nor regard any god”

- a) Again, the word for “god” here is the same as that of “God of his fathers” earlier in the verse – אֱלֹהִים – this time the context is clear as to what it is referring.
- b) He will simply defy all gods – and, as we saw in Revelation 13, he does this to set the stage to be worshipped as god himself.

5. “For he shall magnify himself above all” – above all gods, above all people, above all natural affections, above all nature itself.

6. Vs. 38 are seen as “the characteristics of his theology” (Walvoord). These characteristics, as described here, seem to be that of worshipping materialism rather than deity – which would account for his desire to be worshipped as a god.

Dr. Walvoord:

Examining all other passages relating to the end time, it becomes evident that the sole confidence of the final world ruler is in military power, personified as “the god of war,” or “god of fortresses.” In other

words, he is a complete materialist in contrast to all previous religions and all previous men who claimed divine qualities. This is blasphemy to the ultimate, the exaltation of human power and attainment. He is Satan's masterpiece, a human being who is Satan's substitute for Jesus Christ, hence properly identified as the Antichrist.

- a) There is another usage of the Hebrew word for "God" or "god" here that needs to be addressed. As before, the Hebrew word is the word "elohim" and is speaking, not of the God of heaven, but of a lesser deity – in both instances of its use in this verse.
- b) Both time the word "God," or "god" is used it is the same Hebrew word, and it is given without the definite article. That is not necessarily uncommon, but the context here gives it an important distinction. The word is **אֱלֹהִים** in the first use and **אֱלֹהִים** in the second (the only difference is the holem waw is shortened in the first use).
- c) Literally, the first part of the verse would read, "But a god of forces (or fortresses) in their place he shall honor." It isn't saying that in the estate, or place, of the Antichrist, but it should be read as the Antichrist replacing the gods of his father, and all other gods, with this "god" – with war and materialism.

The ESV reads, "He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these." The NASV is similar: "But instead he will honor a god of fortresses..." The Bishops Bible (predating the KJV) reads, "But in his place shall he honour the God Mauzzun (a simple

transliteration of the Hebrew word used). The Geneva Bible is similar: "But in his place shall he honour the god Mauzzim."

K&D commentary makes this point:

The "god of fortresses" is the personification of war, and the thought is this: he will regard no other god, but only war; the taking of fortresses he will make his god; and he will worship this god above all as the means of his gaining the world-power. Of this god, war as the object of deification, it might be said that his fathers knew nothing, because no other king had made war his religion, his god to whom he offered up in sacrifice all, gold, silver, precious stones, jewels.

7. Vs. 39 is another difficult verse if taken without the understanding of verse 38, and the "god of fortresses" being the god of war and materialism.
 - a) "Thus shall he do in the most strong holds" – the word for "strong" here is the same as for the word "forces" in vs. 38. Literally, "against fortresses of the strong," speaking of the people rather than the buildings, it seems.
 - b) "With a strange god" – again, the "strange god" is a god his fathers didn't worship, a god different and unusual to normal understanding of a "person" of god – hence, the god of war and materialism.
 - c) "Whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory" – the god of war will be the recognized "deity," and it will be given all the worship a personal deity would.

- d) "And he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain" – seems to be something of a "read between the lines" principle here. Those that follow the Antichrist, specifically those rulers that follow him, will be given special places of authority in the New World Order, but it will cost them – in land, in resources, in money, in people ("gain").