

DANIEL

Week 32, Chapter 11 continued

We spent much time following a historical trail of kings and nations last week because it is important to see how the first part of the prophecy of Daniel 11 actually played out. It essentially took us from the end of the Media-Persian Empire, to the new Greek Empire of Alexander the Great, and then to its division into 4 parts. And indeed, through about verse 27 or 28 we can pinpoint real and documented historical happenings that fulfill the prophecy with astounding accuracy. In fact it is primarily this amazing accuracy that has made liberal scholars determine that Daniel had to have been written after the fact.

I have structured this study of Daniel 11 with the premise that it (along with chapter 12) intertwines 3 different eras: the era of the 1st latter days, the era of the 2nd (future) latter days, and the era of the End of Days (that immediately flows from the 2nd latter days). So my hope is to untangle these events spoken of in Daniel and place each in their proper era.

I define these eras in the following way: the 1st latter days were the decades leading up to, during, and immediately following the coming of Christ and then His crucifixion. The 2nd latter days are the decades leading up to and during the 2nd coming of Christ. And the End of Days (or End Time) is the immediate outcome of the 2nd latter days. The End of Days includes the cataclysmic conditions that result from the return of Messiah, the War of Armageddon, and then climactic moments that ushers us into the Millennial Kingdom. The End of Days will also include the pouring out of God's wrath upon the earth. So from the perspective of the Book of Daniel the several prophecies contained in it are about the rise and fall of gentile world domination in order to bring about God's plan of redemption that brings in an Israel-based planet-wide Kingdom of God with its world headquarters in Jerusalem.

But one of the features of Daniel's prophecy is that some of the prophesied events seem to overlap into two eras; some part of a prophecy is fulfilled in one era and completed in the next era. Or the prophecy manifests itself in one era, and then repeats even more fully in the next era. So placing each piece of the prophecy neatly into one era isn't always possible, because that's not even how prophecy generally works. It is usual for prophecy to happen, and then to happen again much later.

What we've seen thus far is that up to verse 21 we can place each event into the era of the 1st latter days. But remember as we study chapters 11 and 12 that there is one overriding context that we must not lose sight of; a context that is a fly in the ointment to much modern popularized prophecy teaching. And that overriding context is stated back in chapter 10 verse 14:

^{CJB} **Daniel 10:14** *So I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the acharit-hayamim; for there is still another vision which will relate to those days."*

It is common in Christianity to interpret the phrase "your people" (Daniel's people) to mean gentile Christians (the church), which couldn't be further from the plain sense of the passage. The passage says that the oracle of this messenger angel has to do with Daniel's people, who of course are the Jews who are in process of being released from their Babylonian exile. Oh yes, Christians and non-believing gentiles will be much affected by what happens here. Christians will be positively affected and non-believing gentiles will be negatively affected. But the purpose, and the point, of what God is doing is directly aimed at the Jewish people, Daniel's people; not humanity in general and certainly not the gentile church.

So, let's begin by re-familiarizing ourselves with the 2nd half of Daniel chapter 11.

RE-READ DANIEL 11: 21 – 39

While only some Bible scholars would agree with me, I find some prophetic overlap of eras beginning in verse 21. That is, the despicable man that arises happens in both the 1st latter days and the 2nd latter days. In the 1st latter days this man is easily identifiable as Antiochus Epiphanies, King of the North. And the despicable man of the 2nd latter days is easily identifiable as the Anti-Christ (although we don't know yet who will occupy that position).

Let me remind you that the term the King of South in these passages means Egypt. The King of the North refers to the king who controls that part of the Greek Empire (or better the Empire of Javan) that is north of Egypt (you can review the previous lesson on your own to understand why calling this empire Javan is preferable to calling it Greece). The reason that kingdoms and territories are discussed in the manner they are in this chapter results from the historical reality that Alexander the Great (king of Greece) conquered the former Media-Persian Empire, but then almost immediately died of illness at 32 years of age. He had no heirs, his death was sudden and unexpected, and so there was no plan of succession in place. Thus his various generals and others of his royal court divided up the empire into several districts or kingdoms and each took one for their own. Over a short period of time the several districts coalesced into only 4 (as predicted in Daniel's prophecy), and then 4 kings ruled over the entire former Greek Empire. The two most powerful and influential of these kings are designated in the Bible as the King of the North and the King of the South. Some commentaries will say that the North is Syria, and while that is a rather large oversimplification, it's not necessarily incorrect.

For the purposes of the first 21 verses for certain, and then probably until either verse 35 or verse 39 (there are good arguments for both viewpoints) the North is ruled by the royal dynasty of the Seleucus family and the South (Egypt) is ruled by the royal dynasty of the Ptolemy family. So all the wars and battles and intrigues we read about at least through verse 21 took place between these 2 ruling dynasties. While power shifted back and forth between the North and the South, it can be generally said that overall the North had more influence and success than the south, and therefore the King of North was usually more powerful than the King of South.

Where things get interesting starts with verse 28, because there it speaks of the king of the North returning home after attacking the king of the South yet again; but a thought has welled up in his mind to come against the holy covenant. And because of this thought he will take some action against it. The holy covenant can only mean God's covenant with Israel in general (that most likely covers both the Abrahamic Covenant and the Covenant of Moses) so this is referring directly to God's covenant people: Israel. Here is what one of the later church fathers Jerome had to say about this passage and what occurred historically:

“Both the Greek and the Roman historians relate that after Antiochus (Epiphanies) had been expelled from Egypt and had gone once more, he came to Judea, that is, against the holy covenant, and that he despoiled the Temple and removed a huge amount of gold. Then having stationed a garrison in the citadel, he returned to his own land”.

Apparently there is some disagreement over why and in what condition Epiphanies and his army left Egypt; Jerome says he was expelled, but the Book of 1st Maccabees says that he was victorious. Likely because the history of what happened is being greatly condensed it is only an issue of semantics. Here is what the Jewish writer of 1st Maccabees says. Please remember that while this book doesn't appear in Protestant Bibles, it remains in Catholic Bibles and the various Eastern Orthodox Christian Bibles. The 15 books of the Apocrypha were removed from Christian Bibles in the 1500's A.D. during the Protestant Reformation. So while these so-called Apocryphal books like Maccabees, and Tobit, and Esdras and others have never been taken by the church as having equal inspiration to the OT and NT, they are considered worthy and reliable and vital for proper Biblical context especially as it concerns the time from about 400 B.C. to the just before the birth of Jesus.

1st Maccabees 1

16 Once Antiochus had seen his authority established, he determined to make himself king of Egypt and the ruler of both kingdoms.¹⁷ He invaded Egypt in massive strength, with chariots and elephants (and cavalry) and a large fleet.¹⁸ He engaged Ptolemy king of Egypt in battle, and Ptolemy turned back and fled before his advance, leaving many casualties.

19 The fortified cities of Egypt were captured, and Antiochus plundered the country.²⁰ After his conquest of Egypt, in the year 143, Antiochus turned about and advanced on Israel and Jerusalem in massive strength.²¹ Insolently breaking into the sanctuary, he removed the golden altar and the lamp-stand for the light with all its fittings,²² together with the table for the loaves of permanent offering, the libation vessels, the cups, the golden censers, the veil, the crowns, and the golden decoration on the front of the Temple, which he stripped of everything.

23 He made off with the silver and gold and precious vessels; he discovered the secret treasures and seized them²⁴ and, removing all these, he went back to his own country, having shed much blood and uttered words of extreme arrogance.

So here we have an authoritative expanded version of what Daniel 11 verse 28 meant that this

King of the North set himself against the holy covenant. But we also have every reason to see these circumstances as happening again in the future when the Anti-Christ reveals himself and does essentially the same thing.

Daniel 11:29 says, however, that Antiochus Epiphanies will later go back to the south with his army but with different results. Apparently while he had accomplished the taking of some fortresses and cities in Egypt in the first attack, the results were short lived. So now in about 168 B.C., Epiphanies takes another expeditionary force to Egypt. Egypt had solved some of its internal squabbles, and in addition had made alliances with Kittim because Daniel 11:30 says that ships will come from Kittim and support Egypt against Epiphanies. I told you in our last lesson that Kittim was the name of a son of Javan (Javan was a grandson of Noach), and that Kittim as a named region is identified with the island of Crete. However it is attested by Josephus that over time the term Kittim became a general designation for all the island nations of the Mediterranean. It is much like today when we refer to the several islands of the Caribbean as just "The Caribbean" as opposed to listing each one separately by name.

Now we arrive at one of the most infamous moments in Jewish history, and of course it is predicted here in Daniel 11.

CJB Daniel 11:31 *Armed forces will come at his order and profane the sanctuary and fortress. They will abolish the daily burnt offering and set up the abomination that causes desolation.*

The army of the North, sent by its king Antiochus Epiphanies, took over the Temple and desecrated it. This event would change Israel forever. When the Jews finally took the Temple back and cleansed it, it was commemorated with a new holiday called Hanukkah: the Feast of Dedication or better, re-dedication. Even though only a couple of short sentences are used in Daniel 11 in prediction of this terrible event, we have the Book of Maccabees that gives us more in-depth information about how this actually played out historically. This will play such a huge role in Israel's future, and will be repeated with the advent of the Anti-Christ, that we would be foolish not to spend a few minutes to read about it.

1st Maccabees 1

²⁹ *Two years later the king sent Mysarch through the cities of Judah. He came to Jerusalem with an impressive force,³⁰ and addressing them with what appeared to be peaceful words, he gained their confidence; then suddenly he fell on the city, dealing it a terrible blow, and destroying many of the people of Israel.*

³¹ *He pillaged the city and set it on fire, tore down its houses and encircling wall,³² took the women and children captive and commandeered the cattle.³³ They then rebuilt the City of David with a great strong wall and strong towers and made this their Citadel.³⁴ There they installed a brood of sinners, of renegades, who fortified themselves inside it,³⁵ storing arms and provisions, and depositing there the loot they had collected from Jerusalem; they were to prove a great trouble.*

³⁶ *It became an ambush for the sanctuary, an evil adversary for Israel at all times.³⁷ They shed innocent blood all round the sanctuary and defiled the sanctuary itself.³⁸ The citizens of Jerusalem fled because of them, she became a dwelling-place of strangers; estranged from her own offspring, her children forsook her.*

³⁹ *Her sanctuary became as forsaken as a desert, her feasts were turned into mourning, her Sabbaths into a mockery, her honour into reproach.⁴⁰ Her dishonour now fully matched her former glory, her greatness was turned into grief.*

⁴¹ *The king then issued a proclamation to his whole kingdom that all were to become a single people, each nation renouncing its particular customs.⁴² All the gentiles conformed to the king's decree,⁴³ and many Israelites chose to accept his religion, sacrificing to idols and profaning the Sabbath.*

⁴⁴ *The king also sent edicts by messenger to Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, directing them to adopt customs foreign to the country,⁴⁵ banning burnt offerings, sacrifices and libations from the sanctuary, profaning Sabbaths and feasts,⁴⁶ defiling the sanctuary and everything holy,⁴⁷ building altars, shrines and temples for idols, sacrificing pigs and unclean beasts,⁴⁸ leaving their sons uncircumcised, and prostituting themselves to all kinds of impurity and abomination,⁴⁹ so that they should forget the Law and revoke all observance of it.⁵⁰ Anyone not obeying the king's command was to be put to death.*

⁵¹ *Writing in such terms to every part of his kingdom, the king appointed inspectors for the whole people and directed all the towns of Judah to offer sacrifice city by city.⁵² Many of the people -- that is, every apostate from the Law -- rallied to them and so committed evil in the country,⁵³ forcing Israel into hiding in any possible place of refuge.*

⁵⁴ *On the fifteenth day of Chislev in the year 145 the king built the appalling abomination on top of the altar of burnt offering; and altars were built in the surrounding towns of Judah⁵⁵ and incense offered at the doors of houses and in the streets.⁵⁶ Any books of the Law that came to light were torn up and burned.⁵⁷ Whenever anyone was discovered possessing a copy of the covenant or practising the Law, the king's decree sentenced him to death.*

⁵⁸ *Month after month they took harsh action against any offenders they discovered in the towns of Israel.⁵⁹ On the twenty-fifth day of each month, sacrifice was offered on the altar erected on top of the altar of burnt offering.*

⁶⁰ *Women who had had their children circumcised were put to death according to the edict⁶¹ with their babies hung round their necks, and the members of their household and those who had performed the circumcision were executed with them.*

⁶² *Yet there were many in Israel who stood firm and found the courage to refuse unclean food.⁶³ They chose death rather than contamination by such fare or profanation of the holy covenant, and they were executed.⁶⁴ It was a truly dreadful retribution that visited*

Israel.

I find it interesting that while we all can feel pain over this, and even some anxiety for what we know lies ahead for the Jewish people who will suffer this anew when the Anti-Christ appears, the reality is that the Church, beginning with the Church of Rome and continuing until today, has in many ways followed Epiphanies' lead and persecuted the Jewish people as well as Believers in Messiah who uphold the Jewish people. The Church has outlawed God's Law, declared Sabbath to be abolished, and (at least as of 2013) in Germany circumcision for any reason was deemed mutilation and thus a crime punishable by prison. Gentile Believers who seek to follow God's biblical law are regularly banished from many of our Christian denominations, and branded as heretics and members of a cult. And while it isn't so today, but Revelation reveals it will be again, just recall that during the Inquisition in Medieval times Jews and Christians who didn't follow these same edicts of their church leaders were imprisoned, beaten, dismembered and burned alive. So as John says in 1John 4:

1John 4:1-5 CJB

CJB 1 John 4:1 Dear friends, don't trust every spirit. On the contrary, test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

2 Here is how you recognize the Spirit of God: every spirit which acknowledges that Yeshua the Messiah came as a human being is from God,

3 and every spirit which does not acknowledge Yeshua is not from God- in fact, this is the spirit of the Anti-Messiah. You have heard that he is coming. Well, he's here now, in the world already!

4 You, children, are from God and have overcome the false prophets, because he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

5 They are from the world; therefore, they speak from the world's viewpoint; and the world listens to them.

Although we speak about the **person** of the Anti-Christ appearing as a future event (which it is), we are told unequivocally by John that the **spirit** of the Anti-Christ is here, now, operating and working through false prophets (meaning religious leaders who teach falsehoods) and worldly leaders who, of course, try to pound biblical faith into a mold that the secular world accepts or they try to ban it altogether. The evil Antiochus Epiphanies overtly attempted to eradicate faith in the God of Israel and the observance of His ways and commands, and of the Levitical sacrifices. And how did he attack the problem? It all began with an order abolishing the Law and getting rid of the Torah, the feasts, Shabbat, and all other holy observances commanded by the Lord. Let those who have an ear to hear, listen.

Verse 31 speaks of the abomination of desolation that will be set up in the holy sanctuary (the Temple). This directly refers to what we learned in 1st Maccabees 1:54 that says:

⁵⁴ On the fifteenth day of Chislev in the year 145 the king built the appalling abomination on top of the altar of burnt offering; and altars were built in the surrounding towns of Judah.

Some kind of structure (a heathen altar structure) was placed on top of the Altar of Burnt Offering at the Temple in Jerusalem. Josephus says that: **“The King (Epiphanies) also built a pagan altar upon the temple altar and slaughtered swine thereon, thereby practicing a form of sacrifice neither lawful nor native to the religion of the Jews”.**

2Maccabees chapter 6 says this about that terrible time:

¹ Shortly afterwards, the king sent Gerontes the Athenian to force the Jews to violate their ancestral customs and live no longer by the laws of God;² and to profane the Temple in Jerusalem and dedicate it to Olympian Zeus, and the one on Mount Gerizim to Zeus, Patron of Strangers, as the inhabitants of the latter place had requested.

³ The advent of these evils was painfully hard for all the people to bear.⁴ The Temple was filled with revelling and debauchery by the gentiles, who took their pleasure with prostitutes and had intercourse with women in the sacred precincts, introducing other indecencies besides.

⁵ The altar of sacrifice was loaded with victims proscribed by the law as profane.⁶ No one might either keep the Sabbath or observe the traditional feasts, or so much as admit to being a Jew.

So we see from this ancient document that the altar was defiled by having a pagan altar placed on top of it, pigs and other forbidden animals were sacrificed there, the Temple was re-dedicated to Zeus Olympus and this would automatically have involved a statue being erected in the Most Holy Place (a dedication of a temple to a pagan god required the image of the god to be placed there). Again: this is going to happen again with the Anti-Christ. And so we can place this event of past history also into the future. We can assign it to the first latter days, and then it will be repeated in the 2nd latter days. So two eras are spoken of here. Or as Dr. Kiel says about these verses: **“These circumstances.....show that in prophetic contemplation in Daniel 11:20 -45 there is comprehended in the image of one king what has been historically fulfilled in its beginnings by Antiochus Epiphanies, but shall only meet its complete fulfillment by the Anti-Christ at the End.”**

Daniel 11:32 tells us the sad reality that many will happily follow along with the king's edicts, and they will do so by means of flattery. That is, the government will congratulate and hold up as intelligent and reasoned, good and responsible citizens, those who follow the government edict, value what the government tells them to value, and discards what the government tells them to discard. But who are these people who go along with Antiochus Epiphanies edicts? Jews. Who else would be rewarded for not following the Law of Moses? For quitting Shabbat? For eating unclean food? For abandoning the Torah? I sure hope that you are feeling a little uncomfortable with all this because this is all much closer to home than any of us would like to admit.

But who will stand firm and prevail? Who will disobey their government and their religious leaders' edicts to abandon the Torah, quit Shabbat, to stop obeying God's commandments? Other Jews. Those faithful Jews who the government and the religious leaders say are rebels. Daniel 11:33 characterizes them as "those who know God". And says verse 33, there will be some in the Jewish population who will understand the gravity of what is happening and tell others about it. Some will comprehend that this isn't just a government trying to do good by establishing tolerance and respect for one another as they claim; this is a bold attempt to eradicate any allegiance to the God of Israel because it is seen as a threat to peace. And many Jews will be steadfast in the Lord and have courage and so continue to defy their government and their Jewish religious leadership knowing that it will probably cost them their friends, their families, their possessions, their livelihoods, and perhaps their lives.

We are told in verse 34 that when these faithful Jews stumble, they get a little help, but most of it will be from so-called brothers who are insincere. That is fellow Jews will come to them, behaving as concerned friends, and try to persuade them that they just need to go along to get along; just follow the crowd because after all if the majority are doing it how can they be wrong? It will be much like when those false friends came to the devastated Job and told him that it can only be because of his sin that these terrible things are happening to him. After all: bad things don't happen to good people, right? The proof of God's love for us is wealth, and popularity, and health, and no problems. So all this trouble Judah is facing from Epiphanies is because these rebellious Jews who just won't compromise are bringing this suffering on to their own heads and this is causing everyone else to suffer, too. Wise up; just blend in and life will be good. God will understand.

But then a warning in verse 36: even some who are wise and sincere will fail when the persecution gets bad enough. This will prove to be a time of great testing, and God intends it that way. Such falling away (stumbling) will be for a purpose: to separate the wheat from the chaff; the goats from the sheep. This should come as no surprise during Antiochus Epiphanies reign of terror, and it also should not surprise us as we are almost certainly living in the 2nd latter days. All throughout the history of God's people, including Christians and Jews, persecution has been part of the experience. And this persecution isn't always by outsiders. It is not always enemies who trouble and kill us. Too often it is by our fellow brethren, family, and community. And this sifting and separating of Believers will continue until the time of end. We are not just told this; we are PROMISED it will happen.

Yeshua is quoted this way in the NT Gospel of John:

John 16:1-5 CJB

^{CJB} John 16:1 "I have told you these things so that you won't be caught by surprise.

² They will ban you from the synagogue; in fact, the time will come when anyone who kills you will think he is serving God!

³ They will do these things because they have understood neither the Father nor me.

⁴ But I have told you this, so that when the time comes for it to happen, you will remember that I told you. I didn't tell you this at first, because I was with you.

⁵ But now I am going to the One who sent me”

We'll continue with Daniel chapter 11 next week.