

The Charted Course of History

Daniel 11-12

INTRODUCTION: We live in a time where the future seems uncertain. Daily we are called upon to make educated guesses as to how we might position ourselves best for what is coming.

- What stock will rise or fall?
- Will a hurricane we can't even pronounce be our demise?
- Will there be a college football season this year?
- Who will lead our country in the next four years?
- Will there be toilet paper at supermarket?
- Will schools be able to reopen?

In my lifetime, these questions have been *fairly predictable*. But now your guess is as good as mine. It seems that all we can do is guess.

Hebrews 12:27 (ESV) tells of a time that everything that can be shaken will be shaken, so that only that which cannot be shaken will remain.

Well what can we be certain of? Where is history going? Never before has it been more *necessary* and *therapeutic* to look into the section of scripture that deals with prophecy.

You see the Bible tells us that history is moving toward a **certain conclusion**. Not only because God **sees** the future, but because God is **Sovereign** over it. God is moving history toward his **foreordained** conclusion, and there is nothing that can stop it.

You say, well what about “**free will**” can't people make different decisions and alter the outcome? Yes and No.

You do make **moral decisions** for which you are *responsible* and *accountable* to God. God also has a free will - and He has willed that certain things WILL happen.

ILLUSTRATION: I have heard it described this way. History is like a great **cruise ship**. People aboard the ship may make 1,000's of decisions based on their free will. But there is a Captain that is driving the whole ship in a certain direction.

You are I are in the ship. God is the Captain. We are accountable for every decision we make. But God is ultimately, Providentially, driving history where He wants it to land.

Now many are trying to guess the course. You however, have ears that hear. You can hear the voice of the Captain who regularly tells you exactly where the vessel is heading.

1. The Consideration of Previous Material (1-35)

At the beginning of the Study we saw the Statue of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. It had four parts -

- A **Head** of Gold - Babylon
- A **Chest** of Silver - Persia
- A **Torso** of Bronze - Greece
- **Legs** of Iron - Rome

Those were four great chapters in human history, an outline if you will. Then, in each subsequent chapter we see more details given. Daniel has survived through the first chapter - he has seen the rise and fall of **Babylon**. He was writing chapters 10-12 in the context of the second major chapter - **Persia**.

Daniel 11:1 (ESV)

¹ "And as for me, in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him.

He goes on to reveal the future for Persia in verses 1-2.

a. Persian Future (1-2)

Daniel 11:2 (ESV)

² "And now I will show you the truth. Behold, three more kings shall arise in Persia, and a fourth shall be far richer than all of them. And when he has become strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece.

So a total of four more Kings will rule in Persia after Darius. Then the Kingdom of Greece will arise.

b. Greek Future (3-29)

Daniel 11:3 (ESV)

³ Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion and do as he wills.

That is **Alexander the Great**. His Kingdom is divided into four parts, we've already talked about that. We see two primary Kingdoms develop in the context of Greek history - One to the North of Israel in Syria, one to the South of Israel in Egypt. **Seleucid** and **Ptolemaic** dynasties (the primary powers of the Greek empire).

These wars were not hugely significant for most of our world history courses. But they were a very big deal to Israel. Why? **Israel was caught in the cross fire.**

Then out of the Syria to the North arises one that we said was a PROTO-TYPE of AntiChrist. Antiochus Epiphanes.

Remember that he seeks to erase Jewish culture and enforce Hellenization, or the Greekification of the empire.

He moves against Egypt to the South...then we see what is described in verse 29.

Daniel 11:29–30 (ESV)

²⁹ “At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south, but it shall not be this time as it was before. ³⁰ For **ships of Kittim** shall come against him,

Kittim is the old name for the Isle of Cyprus. Which in those days if anything came from the West, it was said to come from Kittim.

We know that this was ships from Rome who came to Antiochus and ordered him to return. Which brings us to...

c. Roman Future (30-35)

We know that Antiochus did leave Egypt and took his wrath out on Israel. But in the midst of that desecration the Maccabean revolt took place. Which is referred to in

Daniel 11:33–34 (ESV)

³³ And the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder. ³⁴ When they stumble, **they shall receive a little help...**

There for 80 years Israel gains its independence from Greece. But it says it's only, “a little help” because it is short lived. Eventually, Rome comes in and overtakes that part of the world, setting up a Puppet King - Herod the Great.

All of that is told to us in detail in verses 1-35.

Then there is a bit of a shift in verse 36... we know it is a shift because Paul paraphrases this section in his first letter to the Thessalonians and he does so as pointing to something that is yet to come, namely - the person of Anti-Christ.

SO - from Daniel's perspective this was ALL in the future. From our perspective, 1-35 is in the past and 36 - the end of Daniel is FUTURE. This is what's coming.

2. The Character of Anti-Christ

Now up to this passages has focused on the historic figure of **Antiochus Epiphanes**, but in verse 36 it seems to go beyond him, to the Ultimate AntiChrist that is yet to come. The reason we know this is the case, is because what is said in 36 and following was not true of Antiochus, AND because when Paul refers to this passage in **2 Thess.** Which is almost a direct paraphrase he points out that this person had not yet appeared.

This coming figure who will rule the world during the second coming of Jesus is described in four categories. He is Profane, Perverse, Protected, and Predictable.

a. Profane

³⁶ “And the king shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done. ³⁷ He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers.

So this is a godless, atheistic world leader. This was unthinkable at the time of Daniel. Every nation had a god, every city had a regional deity. Israel was unique because it believed in ONE GOD, they were Monotheist. But Daniel through the eye of prophecy sees a coming leader who rejects all gods.

200 years ago, one could not imagine an irreligious world power, that is until the advent of **Communism**. A political ideology that put the government in the place of God. Today - it is very easy to imagine a world leader who is an avowed Atheist.

We see the **secularization** of the public square. **Atheistic Communism in China** is advancing. The Russian economy took a turn toward growth in 2018 after being decimated through the cold war.

IN our lifetime we have seen this trajectory unfolding - **Pluralism** (all religions are the same), **Secularism** (all religions are irrelevant), **Socialism** (Government Provides), then **Communism** (The state replaces God). This shouldn't surprise the student of scripture.

Not only will he be profane...

b. Perverse

36b. ...or to the one **beloved by women**.

The literal, word for word translation of that verse is - “he will show no desire for women”.

Throughout history - we have seen the intoxicating effect of power on the male psyche. It has led many a ruler to take hundreds of wives and concubines. Or an endless string of mistresses. Not antichrist - it could be that he is **celibate**, but more likely that he is **homosexual**.

Paul warns that a rejection of the CREATOR leads to a pervasion of the sexual appetite

Paul tells us in Romans 1:21–27 (ESV)

²¹ For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools,

²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; ²⁷ and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

This Godless Leader - rejects his Creator and the result is that he casts off all restraint. He doesn't see the illogical nature of homosexuality. He follows his lusts and they grown more and more perverse.

He is Profane, Perverse...

c. Protected

³⁸ He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these. A god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. ³⁹ He shall deal with the strongest fortresses with the help of a foreign god.

Evolutionary Ethics will dominate his thinking - SURVIVAL is the ultimate bottom line.

He will invest heavily in fortifications and expand his military.

d. Predictable

39b. Those who acknowledge him he shall load with honor. He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price.

The world system is remarkably predictable - if you say what they want you to say, you will win. Bow down as they want you to, rewrite history as they say, and agree with them no matter how silly, how illogical - it is very simple.

But if you refuse to cave to their demands. If you shout truth into a hurricane of error. If you refuse to placate and pacify the flimsy whims and wishes of the mob - you are signing your death certificate.

The path to success, go along with the spirit of anti-christ. But friend, remember his success is very short lived. Stand for truth and you will stand for a million years.

3. The Conflict of Anti-Christ

⁴⁰ "At the time of the end, the king of the south shall attack him, but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships. And he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through.

Most commentators believe this is saying that a battle will occur between the King of the South and the King of the North, AntiChrist.

41 He shall come into the glorious land. (that is Israel) And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites.

Edom and Moab are modern day Jordan - a relatively neutral country currently. Keep in mind these are predominantly Islamic countries. They will not approve of the peace treaty Antichrist makes with Israel which gives them control of the temple mount, nor Antichrist setting up his throne on the temple mount.

42 He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. 43 He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the precious things of Egypt, and the Libyans and the Cushites shall follow in his train. 44 But news from the east and the north shall alarm him,

What is east of Israel? We are.

44b. and he shall go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction. 45 And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain. Yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him.

4. The Consummation of the Kingdom

In this final chapter, the vision jumps over a lot of material we are given in the NT.

a. Rescue

Daniel 12:1–13 (ESV)

1 “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.

I would suggest that if America is mentioned in Scripture it is at this juncture. The parallel passage to Dan. 12 in the NT is Rev. 12. Rev. 12 speaks repeatedly about a time when Anti-Christ will war against Israel, but somehow God uses extraordinary means to protect her. It's mentioned a couple of times in chapter 12, but look closely at verse 13-14.

Revelation 12:13–14 (ESV)

13 And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. 14 **But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle** so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.

Since Israel's reconstitution as a Sovereign Nation in 1948 the US has been a consistent ally to this people. At times, we have been their only ally. Day after day, her neighbors scheme ways to wipe Israel off the map, but God has given Israel a friend in the USA.

Could it be that we are nation God uses to fly Israel to a place of protection in the wilderness - two wings of a great eagle?

ILLUSTRATION: In my office hangs a photo we made of the valley of **Megiddo**. In the center of that valley is an underground air-force base for the Israeli air force. Last year that base flooded, it's underground in a valley. The united states replaced the jets that Israel lost free of charge. Who else would God use to come to the defense and protection of Israel. Perhaps - we are the two wings of the great eagle.

b. Resurrection

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

This is the final resurrection and final judgement. Everyone will be raised, saved and lost, and brought before the Tribunal Judgment bar of God. At this point, the only thing that will matter is what you have done with Jesus Christ. You will spend eternity in one of two places.

c. Reward

³ And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

Those who are saved share in his Nature here, and will share in his nature there forevermore.

¹¹ And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. ¹² Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days.

¹³ But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days."

CONCLUSION/INVITATION:

What an odd way that is to end the book - the whole world is coming to an end. Now, back to work. But that's the point of Prophecy - NOT to say, "get your guns and ammo, get your food stored up, or sit on a Mt. And wait. It says - here is what's coming, guaranteed, now you don't have to guess, you don't have read your horoscope, just get back to serving Christ wherever you are called.

"There is no fear judgment for the man who judges himself"
Howard Hendricks