

Introduction - Daniel 11 - The Three Madmen

We saw last time that an angel was sent to Daniel to bring him an important prophetic message, yet it took 21 days to reach Daniel because of conflict in the angelic realm. To be specific, a demonic spirit called 'the prince of Persia' resisted this angel from reaching Daniel until Michael, one of the chief princes, came to his aid. Today we shall look at the first part of this message. It is quite a long chapter so we will focus on some areas more than others. It should also be noted that when Daniel was given this prophecy every part of it concerned the future. Today, it is partly past history, and partly future history! There are three men I want to focus on in this study. Two are part of chapter 11 and one is very familiar (and hated) to those of our grandparent's generation. The three madmen that this study will focus on are, of course, Antiochus Epiphanes, Adolf Hitler, and a third man who has not arrived on the scene yet. But he is generally known as the 'antichrist'.

Future world history in advance

Daniel 11:1-4

"Now then, I tell you the truth: Three more kings will appear in Persia, and then a fourth, who will be far richer than all the others. When he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece. Then a mighty king will appear, who will rule with great power and do as he pleases. After he has appeared, his empire will be broken up and parceled out toward the four winds of heaven. It will not go to his descendants, nor will it have the power he exercised, because his empire will be uprooted and given to others.

In the early part of this revelation, the angel outlines the future history for the Medo-Persian Empire and the Grecian Empire with particular focus on the fourth ruler in Persia (Xerxes I) and the mighty king from Greece, Alexander the Great. At the peak of his power, Alexander died at the not so ripe old age of 32. His two sons were then murdered and his kingdom was divided between his four generals.

"After Alexander's death, his kingdom was divided among his four generals (Dan. 8:22): Seleucus (over Syria and Mesopotamia), Ptolemy (over Egypt), Lysimachus (over Thrace and portions of Asia Minor), and Cassander (over Macedonia and Greece). This division was anticipated through the four heads of the leopard (Dan. 7:6) and the four prominent horns on the goat (Dan. 8:8)."

Verse 5-20 of Daniel 11 outline the continued conflict between the Ptolemies (who ruled Egypt "the king of the South") and the Seleucids (who ruled Syria "the king of the North"). But let's have a look at the introduction of a new king in verse 21 as he is a very interesting character indeed!

The coming of the despicable person

Daniel 11:21-24 "He will be succeeded by a contemptible person who has not been given the honor of royalty. He will invade the kingdom when its people feel secure, and he will seize it through intrigue. Then an overwhelming army will be swept away before him; both it and a prince of the covenant will be destroyed. After coming to an agreement with him, he will act deceitfully, and with only a few people he will rise to power. When the richest provinces feel secure, he will invade them and will achieve what neither his fathers nor his forefathers did.

These verses introduce the person that is the biggest type of the coming antichrist that there is in scripture. His name is Antiochus Epiphanes. Antiochus came to power in the Syrian branch of the Greek empire in 175 BC and by all accounts had quite a high opinion of himself. In fact, he even had a special name that he liked to be called – "theos epiphanes" which means "God made manifest". We see from the verses above that he rose to the throne through 'intrigue' taking it through a mixture of force and deception.

Time to take it out on the Jews....

Daniel 11:29-35 "At the appointed time he will invade the South again, but this time the outcome will be different from what it was before. Ships of the western coastlands will oppose him, and he will lose heart. Then he will turn back and vent his fury against the holy covenant. He will return and show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant. "His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation. With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him. "Those who are wise will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered. When they fall, they will receive a little help, and many who are not sincere will join them. Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time.

We read above about Antiochus' invasion of the south (Egypt) but this time things don't go so well as Egypt is helped by Rome (western coastlands). In the face of a humiliating defeat, Antiochus again turns his attention to the Jews. History records that he ordered his troops to stamp out every trace of Judaism and anyone found worshiping the God of Israel was put to death. The sacrifices were stopped, the scriptures were burnt. He ordered an altar dedicated to

Zeus to be erected and pigs were sacrificed to the Greek gods in the Jewish temple. This act is that mentioned above as the 'abomination of desolation'. Now does any of this sound familiar? It should do for it typifies the attitude of Hitler in trying to wipe out the entire Jewish race and it gives us a picture of the coming 'abomination of desolation' that Jesus said will shortly precede His return at the end of the age (Matt 24:15) where the coming world leader will place himself in the Jewish temple declaring worship of himself as God (2 Thes 2:3-4).

Introducing the Antichrist

Daniel 11:36-37 "The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place. He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all.

The first thing we see about the coming antichrist is that 'he will do as he pleases'. That is, he will be an absolute dictator. Now that doesn't mean that there won't be opposition or conflict. Far from it! But it does mean that no one will be able to stop him! In the words of Revelation 'the whole world was astonished and followed the beast. Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?" This coming king will recognize no rule or authority either in heaven or on earth but will exalt himself above every god and will embody and seek to establish Satan's long held desire to 'be like the Most High' (Isaiah 14:14) In doing so he will speak out with all sorts of blasphemy against the true God.

Daniel 11:38-39 Instead of them, he will honor a god of fortresses; a god unknown to his fathers he will honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. He will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign god and will greatly honor those who acknowledge him. He will make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price.

Outwardly, the antichrist's 'god' will be warfare. That is who he will worship, honor and trust. He will place his trust in his military strength and promote war. And he will be successful for behind the scenes he shall be helped by a 'foreign god'. As Revelation tells us 'the dragon (Satan) gave the beast (Antichrist) his power and his throne and great authority.' And the antichrist will not be above buying off and rewarding those that fall into line and acknowledge him.

But he will come to his end

Daniel 11:40-45 "At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans and Nubians in submission. But reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many. He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

As we see from the verses above, the antichrist's rise to power is not without conflict. Not everyone is initially willing to fall into line with a new world ruler and we read of both the king of the north and the south engaging in warfare against him. This will lead to an invasion of Israel (the 'beautiful land') and many countries will be taken by force. Edom, Moab and Ammon (modern day Jordan) are delivered from his hand however as this seems to be the area that God sets aside for the Jews to flee to for protection during the tribulation.

We also read above that he will pitch his tent between the seas and the beautiful holy mountain. That is, between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea at Jerusalem. In a vain attempt to pose as Christ, the Antichrist will set up his headquarters in Jerusalem, the same city from which Christ will rule the world in the Millennium. Yet this poser will come to his end. The Lord will see to that!

Rev 19:19-20 Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet... The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

2 Thes 2:8 '...the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.'

Conclusion - Antiochus Epiphanes hated and persecuted the Jews trying to destroy every trace of Judaism and worship of the true God. Hitler hated and persecuted the Jews and tried to destroy every trace of the Jews themselves. In killing over 6 million Jews he got one third of the way to achieving his satanic goal. Yet as bad as both of these men were, they are still only smaller glimpses of the coming world leader. Both Daniel and Jesus stated that this period of time will involve distress and tribulation on a scale that had never been experienced before.