

Daniel 06-04-30b

Let's resume our study now in the book of Daniel chapter 11. Let me give you an outline, particularly if you're taking notes, or you can just make a little note in the margin of your Bible, if you're not afraid to write in your Bible. This section in Daniel chapter 11, and it actually goes through chapter 12 verse 3, is the prediction that Gabriel gives to Daniel of future history.

Alexander the Great is in verses 3 and 4. Of course, verse 2 was the Persian rule. Then the Seleucids and the Ptolemies, the section we covered in some detail last time, is in verses 5 through 20. And now the section that we are currently perusing is verses 21 through 35.

This section, 21 through 35, is all about Antiochus IV Epiphanies. If you remember, last week I was racking my brain because we were talking about how the ancients would change names, like Beelzebul would change to Beelzebub, and Mephibahal would be changed to Mephibosheth, and the Hebrews were fond of warping names to mock people. Well, this was actually what I was trying to think of.

I knew it was in my preparation, but Antiochus Epiphanies, the Jews didn't like him much, and so they called him Antiochus Epiphanies. And changing the PH to an M changes his name from being Antiochus the Illustrious One. You know, I had an epiphany, I had a blinding flash of light, a blinding flash of insight.

Instead of being Epiphanies, Epiphanies means the madman. So, you know, in a crowd when they're all saying, Hail Antiochus Epiphanies, Hail Antiochus Epiphanies, they're saying Hail Antiochus the nutball, basically. So, his rule, as I said, is 175 to 163 BC.

Keep in mind now the time of the translation of the Septuagint, circa 200 BC, in which is included the book of Daniel, by the way. But beyond this, to complete the outline, we have Roman rule, the Roman Empire, the fourth great beast in the visions that we've already seen in the book of Daniel, the legs and feet of iron. This is going to come up in verses 36 through 45 of Daniel chapter 11.

And then we're going to move into the great tribulation of the end times in chapter 12, verse 1, and then the ultimate deliverance by Messiah in the last half of verse 1 of chapter 12 and into verses 2 and 3. So, Messiah the Prince at the end of this. So, we, as I said, are in the section verses 21 through 35, Antiochus Epiphanies or Epiphanies, depending on what mood you're in. And we said, and I suggested in the beginning, that this is where the typology really kicks in and begins to give us a stereo view, because we're going to have details about, for us, historical Antiochus, but it is going to foreshadow and predict many of the aspects of the final man of sin, the final persecutor of the Jews in history prior to the Millennial Kingdom, which is the Antichrist.

So, this is going to be typological in many ways. And as you finish up this section, the willful king who appears in 36 through 45 and 12.1a is going to depict the final hours of the tribulation

and then Israel will be rescued by the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, the denouement of the battle of Armageddon, and so forth. So, there is this power struggle in human forces.

These happen to be political, military, empire type forces in Daniel's day, representative to you and to me of those forces beyond our control in the workplace, in school, in relationships, in different areas of life, where stuff happens and we have to try to place it in some sort of context. All people have coping mechanisms for events that come their way, whether good or bad. Some people use humor.

Some people use cynicism. Some people use worry. Some people want to talk endlessly.

Whenever something comes up, they've got to find somebody and just talk and talk and talk and talk. And this is sort of therapeutic. It's a sublimation.

Rather than really dealing with the reality of something in my own soul, I'll spend my time communicating it to someone else and distracting myself in this way by talking about it and gaining perhaps sympathy or at least a sympathetic ear, somehow ameliorates the whole thing and sort of turns it to advantage because many of us, most of us, find some satisfaction in being the focus of attention. And if we can tell someone our problems, if we can detail our woes and nobody knows the trouble I've seen, we unconsciously wind up making an issue of ourselves and our problems and we kind of set ourselves at the center of a great wheel with spokes and a rim that all centers on us. These are different coping mechanisms.

We're going to see here that there is a definite way to view the happenings in the world and the happenings in our life that keeps us focused on God and on His will and on His purpose. People are haranguing each other and going back and forth about our foreign policy in the United States today. We've got an ongoing war in Iraq.

We have an ongoing war against terrorism around the globe. We have the threat of nuclear proliferation in Iran and in Korea. We have great conflict and schism and naysaying and bitter, bitter animosity toward our current occupants of the executive branch of government.

We have great consternation over many things, both at home and abroad in our national life. And a lot of people are getting just wrapped all around the axle on this and not, even as believers, not putting these events in perspective. When we get to chapter 12, we're going to see that the conclusion of the matter is don't forget who's in charge.

Don't forget who is overseeing, who has allowed for this, who has woven it into His plan. And remember that ultimately, it isn't the king of the north or the king of the south who prevails. Ultimately, it is the king from heaven.

Ultimately, it is the plan from heaven. Ultimately, it is the purpose from heaven that is not upset, is not foiled, is not countermanded, is not contravened, is not set aside. God's plan, God's king, do not fall to the ground.

He doesn't fall off His horse. He's not poisoned. He's not defeated.

He's not turned back. He isn't unseated by forces from within or without. God's batting average is 1.0. He never fails.

There is this constant effort to diminish God, to squeeze God down into human understanding and make Him the genie of Aladdin's lamp and just some sort of nice benevolent force to appeal to or someone to look to for kind of moral guidance and a nice philosophy of being good to one another and not recognizing that He is the sovereign, all-powerful, all-knowing Creator God of the entire universe. And this universe is the equivalent of one of those little, I always think of it like those things you shake that have the snowflakes inside. It's got a little winter scene for Christmas and there's a sleigh in a church or something and you reach over and it's a paperweight.

It's a round piece of glass or acrylic with water inside and you shake it and the snowflakes settle. This entire universe is the equivalent of a paperweight on God's desk and He can pick it up and shake it. He can tilt it.

He can utterly control it. He made it. He's going to destroy it and replace it with a new and better heaven, earth, and Jerusalem.

And to think that we should be worried and we should be upset and we should come unglued at the unfolding of events, the only way we can think that is to take our eyes off God and to forget who He is. And that's the essence of this message in chapter 11. Well, what else do we see? Let's take a look at this section in the chapter before us, beginning in verse 21.

After the poisoning of Antiochus III's son, Seleucus Philopator, loving father. Seleucus the loving father. Well, he gets poisoned.

Antiochus IV becomes the ruler. He's the son of Antiochus III, brother to Seleucus IV. He's going to rule for a dozen years.

And this next section is going to give as much attention to him as all the others we've seen combined. He's introduced the very first thing. What does it tell us? In his place shall arise a vile person.

This word means contemptible, disgusting. He took to himself this name Epiphanes, the illustrious one. But the throne rightly should have gone to Demetrius Soter, a son of Antiochus' brother, Seleucus IV Philopator, who got poisoned.

But Antiochus just jumped on the throne and proclaimed himself king before Demetrius could get there. So, he didn't come to the throne. Antiochus did not come to the throne by rightful succession.

He seized it through intrigue, just as Gabriel predicted. Why was he accepted? Why didn't they

kick him out and go get Demetrius and make him the king? Well, there was an invasion, probably the Egyptians. History's a little spotty at this point.

He also deposed Onias III, the high priest, who is referred to here by the term prince of the covenant, or leader of the covenant. So, then in verse 23, it tells us, after the league is made with him, he will act deceitfully. He will come up and become strong with a small number of people.

He basically started bribing. He started redistributing wealth, seizing the estates and the holdings of those who were unfavorable to him, eliminating them and giving that wealth to those who were his friends. And he sort of bought the loyalty of those close to him.

So, you find that referred to here. And it says, he will enter peaceably, even into the richest places of the province, and he shall do what his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers. He shall disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches, and devise his plans against the strongholds.

These are the strongholds of his political opponents. And he basically goes in and smiles and comes in peace, and then stabs them in the back and takes their stuff, and builds up his friends and eliminates his enemies in this way. So, he is duplicitous.

He is vile and contemptible. He does things that the predecessors, who were busy conquering and poisoning in one thing or another, plotting and scheming, but nothing like him. He brings this to a new level of refinement.

It says in verse 25, he will stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army. This has been the bugaboo for decades, hasn't it? The king of the south, they keep getting their purposes turned back and their army is defeated by the Ptolemies down there. So, he first consolidates his kingdom, he gets everybody in power on his side, he enriches them, and of course there are strings attached because now he is going to expect support from these individuals to go down and attack the king of the south.

Now, this might remind you of something, if you've been in our Esther study, where in the first chapter of that book Ahasuerus is wining and dining all of the satraps from the 127 provinces, bringing them up and getting them on board so that they will finance his expedition against the Greeks, who defeated his father Darius and created this embarrassment and this blot on their family Iscuchus, and he wants to go back and make that good. So, he's got to consolidate his political power, gain everybody's support, get a pledge of their wealth, and then go against the Greeks. Well, the same thing is happening here with Antiochus, the Epiphanes.

He consolidates his kingdom, then he's ready to move against Egypt, the king of the south. Now, this battle, where Antiochus is ready to go against Egypt, this is 170 BC. What was happening 170 years ago in this country? 100 years ago it was 1906.

70 more years ago it was 1836. What was going on in this country in 1836? You've got the war

against the Mexicans down there. You've got, who was the president at that time? Was it Jackson? Sandy Jackson? He's somewhere in that vicinity.

You have the expansion and conquest of the west. Texas doesn't become a state until 1845. You have the pushing out of the frontiers of the United States.

It's before the Civil War. You have the burgeoning of plantations and slavery and whatnot in the south. You have the ever moving machinery of politics and of commerce in the north.

But 170 years ago is still a long time ago to us. It's before the Industrial Revolution. It's kind of in the midst of the agricultural phase of our nation's expansion.

A lot depends on cotton. A lot depends on tobacco. A lot depends on our relationship with European powers who have laid claim to land that we're trying to move into and so on.

Louisiana Purchase and working with the French and the British and the Spaniards out in California and that kind of thing. So, 170 years ago, that's the distance of these events to the time of Christ. 170 B.C. It's also a formative time in the Middle East and in the area where Christ is going to be born.

The Roman Empire has not arisen yet in the same way that the United States had not yet become the power in the 1830s that it will be 100 years later, 70 years later. So, that's where we are. This is when Antiochus decides to come down and attack Egypt.

He moves his army from his homeland down to Egypt. What does he have to pass through? Israel. The Egyptians are not sitting there fanning themselves with palm branches gazing at the pyramids.

They see Antiochus coming and so they gin their army up and they meet Antiochus right at the border of Egypt which is at Pelusium. This is down by the Nile Delta, right in the crook of the Mediterranean Sea there. In this battle, the Egyptians have a large army.

So, this is what we have in verse 25. He, Antiochus, stirs up his power and his courage against the king of the south. Great army.

The king of the south is stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army. But he shall not stand. The Egyptians were defeated and Antiochus, having beaten this army, having whipped them good, holds out a hand of friendship.

And he says, look, I'm not trying to wipe you out. I just want to keep you in your place here so let's be friends. So, he sat down at them with the table.

Or sat down with them at the table. Those who eat of the portion of his delicacies shall destroy him. His army shall be swept away and many shall fall down slain.

So, Antiochus defeats them. They sit down and eat delicacies as though they're big buddies. But

both of them are being deceitful.

Both of them are putting up a facade. So, Antiochus takes a lot of the wealth of Egypt back to his land. Verse 28.

He returns to his land with great riches. And it's on his way back through Israel. He has his heart moved against the holy covenant.

So, he shall do damage and return to his own land. And he's a little bit frustrated because he had hoped to conquer all of Egypt. But when he wins this one big battle and sits down at the table.

And he realizes, well, I won this battle at the border. But there's no way I can seize the whole land. And I'm going to have to go back and settle for this sort of temporary truce.

So, he's kind of disgruntled as he's going back through Israel anyway. And he looks around. And he sees the system by this time.

The temple of Ezra and Nehemiah's day is standing. And the Jews have, of course, returned and reestablished worship. And he looks around and he says, wait a minute.

I don't like this. These people ought to be. I mean, I dominate the area.

I'm Antiochus Epiphanes. And they're worshiping some other deity. And they don't recognize my divinity.

And they don't recognize my authority. And they don't recognize my kingship. They're waiting for some other king.

So, his heart is turned against the Holy Covenant. So, he does damage and then returns to his own land. And this is a reference to his desecration of the temple.

And that's what he does after 170, or in 170. Well, in verse 29 it says, At the appointed time he shall return and go towards the south. Now, we step back once again.

And we think about this chapter. This is my fear. Is that we're going to be going through these historical details.

And we're just going to glaze over. And not really find any spiritual value in history. I went through.

I took ancient history as an elective at school. Which you're supposed to do in classes where you can get an A. And bring your grade point average up. Well, I had a burning interest in ancient history.

And so, I took it as an elective. And I got a C. Because I kept bogging down in these dates and names and details. And it wasn't a living history.

It didn't really mean something. And that's my fear when we go through Daniel 11. Is we're going to say, oh yeah, Antiochus.

Go down to Egypt. Fight a battle. Go back.

And then we're, you know, Z, Z, Z, Z, Z. Well, think about this. Look at the first words in verse 29. At the appointed time.

These events are happening. And this seems to be all cause and effect down on earth. But these things are happening on a timetable established by whom? God.

God appoints a time for one king to rise and be powerful. God appoints a time for another king to be defeated. The best laid schemes of mice and men.

Ganging and glee. Because there are appointed times. So, he comes through and desecrates the temple.

And the Jews are shocked and dismayed. Well, at the appointed time, he shall return and go toward the south. But it shall not be like the former or the latter.

And in history, we find that two years later. This is 168 BC. Antiochus comes down against Egypt again.

He's going into Egypt. But this time, it's different. You know why? This time, there's somebody besides Egyptians down there.

It is the Romans. The forces of the Romans appear on the stage of history at this point. And when Antiochus goes down there and tries to take Egypt, the Romans have come to Egypt in ships from the western coastlands.

Verse 30. Ships from Cyprus, from Kittin, says in Hebrew. K-I-T-T-I-M.

Will come against him and he shall be grieved and return in rage against the holy covenant and do damage. This is basically like kicking the dog. Something bad happens, you kick the dog.

The first time he came down to Egypt, didn't accomplish all of his goal. He was disgruntled. And so he desecrated the temple and went back home.

This time he goes down to Egypt and he really gets his army kicked around. He gets his helmet handed to him with his head in it. And he is very much unhappy.

And so this time when he goes back through, he's really upset. The Roman Senate had written a letter and sent it to Antiochus. There was a guy named Popilius Laenus.

Not how anybody could look down in a crib at a little newborn baby and name it Popilius beats me. But that was his name, Popilius Laenus. And he carries this letter down to Antiochus and says, Don't attack Egypt.

We're an ally of Egypt and we're telling you, don't attack. So Antiochus said, well, I need time to think about this. When Popilius brings him this letter, he says, well, I need to think about it.

So Popilius says, well, fine. And he takes a stick and here's Antiochus standing there. Popilius is standing in front of him.

He hands him this letter. He reads it. The sentence says, don't attack Egypt.

And Antiochus says, well, give me some time to think about it. Popilius says, well, fine. He takes a stick and he draws a circle in the sand around Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

And he says, take all the time you want, but don't step out of this circle until you give me an answer. Well, Antiochus, knowing something of the power of Rome, which is on the ascendancy, and this is going to flank him big time because you know where Rome is. They're behind him.

If he's got all of his forces down there trying to attack Egypt and he ticks the Romans off, they're going to go ransack his homeland before he can trudge his way back up there and defend it. And Popilius knows this. Popilius is no fool.

He's not expecting to get hacked into little pieces of dog food. And when he draws a circle around Antiochus, he's basically saying, look, we've got you sort of surrounded. We've got forces down here in Egypt.

They can kick you back into the land of the Jews. And we've got our homeland forces and we'll come in. They've got him kind of in a pincher there.

And so he draws that circle around him in the sand. And Antiochus says, okay, because if he doesn't, he's basically declaring war on Rome and this is a bad thing. Well, this is humiliating to Antiochus because he'd come down there thinking, well, two years ago I didn't really do it right.

I'm going to really knock him dead this time. And instead they draw a little circle around him and he has to quail, he has to submit. He has to call the whole thing off.

So he is deeply unhappy and he's looking for somebody to take it out on. So you'll see here in verse 30, ships from Cyprus come against him. He shall be grieved, i.e. he will lose heart and he will return in rage against the Holy Covenant and do damage.

This is fury. He is furious at this setback. So he will return and he will show regard for those who forsake the Holy Covenant.

He's looking for Jews who will turn against their own people, their own system of worship, the covenant that God has with them and will throw in with him. So these are renegades. These are ne'er-do-wells.

These are the off-scourings of which in any group, in any society, you're going to find some who

just are vile and contemptible, just like Antiochus. And these birds of a feather flock together. So they forsake the Holy Covenant and they throw in with him.

It says in verse 31, forces shall be mustered by him and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress. Then they shall take away the daily, and you'll notice sacrifices is in italics there. But this had come to mean the daily sacrifices in the same way that in English we have the word holiday.

If you break that down, where does that word come from? Holy day. And we talk about July the 4th as a holiday. Well, the word holiday has taken on a significance all its own.

In the same way, the daily in Hebrew took on the significance of the sacrifices that were offered daily at the temple. So you could say the dailies. In fact, we have that in English talking about newspapers.

We say, well, have you read the dailies? They're talking about the daily newspapers from the major urban centers, the New York Times and the Washington Post and so on. Well, so he will cut these off. What happened? For the second time, he comes up and takes out his frustrations on the Jews and their temple.

He desecrates the temple. He abolishes the sacrifice. He sent Apollonius, his general, with 22,000 soldiers into Jerusalem.

They came up and they were waving a white flag and they said this is a peace delegation. We're here to tell you how things are. Antiochus, he's your benevolent Epiphanes guy.

He's here all is well. Well, as soon as they got inside the gates of Jerusalem, they posed as a peace mission, but on Saturday, the Sabbath, they attacked. They pulled out their spears and unsheathed their swords and just started wailing all over the people of Jerusalem.

They captured women and children and hauled them off as slaves. Just left blood running in the streets. They plundered.

They set fire to the city. Completely, this is one of those I embrace you and you stab me in the soft underbelly that's exposed by my embrace. That's what they did.

And Antiochus is just saying, well, if I can't lick the Egyptians, I'm going to lick the next best thing, these Jews. And he outlawed the system of worship mandated by the Mosaic law. He made it illegal to follow Jewish religious practice.

He outlawed the feasts. He outlawed the offerings. He outlawed the priesthood.

He outlawed the sacrifices. He outlawed circumcision. And he commanded that every copy of God's word be discovered and burned.

It's always good when you're trying to get people off of one thing and onto another, not just to concentrate on getting off of the one thing, you have a substitute. You're trying to quit

smoking, you chew gum, or do the Kojak thing with Tootsie Pops or something. You turn away from one thing and turn toward another.

So when Antiochus attempts to abolish the worship of God as detailed in the Law of Moses, he wants to put another one in his place. And so he sets up the abomination of desolation. Took away the daily sacrifices and placed there the abomination of desolation.

You want to worship something, worship this, he says. This took place on December the 16th, 167 B.C. He put up an altar to Zeus right on top of the altar of burnt offering outside the temple. Just came in there and converted the altar of God into an altar to Zeus.

And the first sacrifice offered on that altar was a hog. Swine, a pig. Offensive, illegal, under the Law of Moses, unclean.

But having been through there once before, he knew all about their law. He knew about their Sabbath. He knew about their sacrifices.

He knew about their worship of God. He knew what was clean and unclean. And so he puts a new altar right on top of God's altar and offers a pig on it.

December the 16th, 167 B.C. And he made it a law that the Jews themselves were required to offer a pig on, get this, the 25th of each month to celebrate his birthday. Instead of having a birthday once a year, Antiochus said, I want you to celebrate my birthday, it's the 25th, every month. 25th of every month, slaughter a pig on this altar or else.

Antiochus promised the Jews who went along willingly with this, those ones who violate the covenant back in verse 30, great reward if they would promote, encourage and follow this new... He said, if you want to offer sacrifices, fine. Celebrate my birthday, slay a pig, 25th of each month. And I'll reward you.

If you don't do it, I will slaughter you. Well, many in Israel went along with this and said, hey, why get slaughtered? It doesn't look like God's protecting us anyway. Look at how we've been trampled and trounced in all these King of the South, King of the North episodes for the last couple of hundred years.

God's deliverance is not showing up. Where is the promise of His coming? All things go on as they have before. Here's somebody that will actually come through and give us something good if we'll do what He says.

So, hey, we're pragmatic people. We're practical minded. Let's do this.

Look, Ahab next door did this and Antiochus gave him a big chunk of money. Let me do that and get in on this good thing. Where's the God of Israel? So, those who do wickedly against the covenant, he shall corrupt, verse 32, with flattery.

But the people who know their God shall be strong and carry out great exploits. This is a small

faithful remnant. The 7,000 who do not bow the knee to Baal as it were.

And they are going to carry out great exploits. You'll notice that exploits is in italics there. It just says they will be strong and carry out.

This doesn't really mean to carry out. This is like the same Greek word that has the idea to bear or carry. And this means to endure.

Because there were no great exploits on the part of these people. They like to say, well, this is the Maccabees and that sort of thing. That's not what Gabriel is talking about here.

There are those who are faithful, who know their God, they will be strong and they will carry through. They will bear up under. They will endure is the idea.

People like to see the Maccabees here. I would argue that you can look at the career of the Maccabees and as wonderful as they were and as brave and courageous as they were, it's difficult to see that they knew their God. They ended up setting up a priesthood that doesn't conform to the law of Moses, right? They ended up with a priesthood that is not Levitical.

And to me, that's not knowing God. And I don't think that's who Gabriel is talking about here. And that's why you have great exploits in italics.

That's someone's interpretation, trying to shoehorn the Maccabees into this verse. Those of the people who understand shall instruct many. Yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering.

Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help. But many shall join with them by intrigue and some of those understanding shall fall. And this talks about the fact that these who are doing the right thing, these who know God, these who have understanding, are going to fall.

They're going to go down in flames. Have we seen this happen in history? John the Baptist was executed. Paul the Apostle was executed.

Peter the Apostle was executed. Wycliffe and Tyndale and many other great heroes of the faith have fallen, been executed, burned at the stake, had their ashes scattered, had their works burned up. Read Fox's Book of Martyrs sometime.

Many who are faithful fall because unlike the expectation of Israel, unlike the argument that we're going to see in the book of Job in coming weeks, just because you are faithful and obedient and doing the right thing, you cannot hold God to a false standard of blessing. Well, Lord, I have been faithful, therefore nothing bad should happen to me. Sometimes bad things are a part of the plan and purpose of God and our life is not the be-all and end-all.

Our life is not the universe of God's plan. Sometimes it is a part of God's plan that the righteous suffer. Sometimes it is a part of God's plan that the righteous fall.

Look at Daniel himself. Godly man. Man after God's own heart.

One of the wisest. He's in the three wisest men ever that Ezekiel lists. Noah, Job, and Daniel.

Most righteous, most wise in the entire Old Testament. And Daniel gets carried away, gets made a eunuch, never has a family, never returns to his homeland. Many would look at him and say, well, you know, it didn't turn out too well for you.

We have to understand, this is why I was talking about Psalm 27 earlier. This is why we took a look at that Robert Burns poem. Our expectations, our schemes, our prediction of the future oftentimes goes awry.

We have to educate ourselves and inform ourselves and be aware and be at peace with the plan and purpose of God. Let God figure out what is good. Let God figure out what is going to have eternal value.

We know that in the end, all things work together for good. That's why the good is going to come in Daniel chapter 12, verses 1 through 3. But in the meantime, even these who understand, even these who are faithful and can instruct others are going to fall. They will be aided with some help when they fall, but they're going to fall.

It's a part of the plan and purpose of God. Do we have enough faith in God to fall? To suffer loss? The book of Job is going to instruct us greatly in this, isn't it? Well, this is where we'll pick up next time toward the end of chapter 11. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the riches of the truth of your word. Thank you for the depth of understanding that is available to us as we ask and seek and knock on the door of understanding and of comprehension of these great truths in your word. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will minister them to our hearts, help us to live in a way that is pleasing in your sight and glorifying to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We ask it in his name. Amen.