"WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST"

Daniel 11:2-45

8-1-2021

INTRODUCTION: Why is there war? (James 4:1-2)

***Sinful man will always war to selfishly get more!**

I. THE WARS OF THE GRECIANS (v. 2-20)

II. THE WARS OF A SINFUL MAN (Antiochus Epiphanes) (v. 21-35)

III. THE WARS OF "THE MAN OF SIN" (Antichrist) (v. 36-45)

A. His Arrogance (v. 36)

B. His god (v. 37-39)

C. His Conflicts (v. 40-44)

D. His Palace (v. 45a)

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Having revealed that 70-sevens of years (490 years) were determined against Israel (Dan. 9:24-27), God now gives some of the details of the wars and troubles to befall the land of Israel and the people of Israel.

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I. THE WARS OF THE GRECIANS (v. 2-20)

V. 2

"I shew thee the truth" - Many of the prophecies of Daniel 11 have already been fulfilled with remarkable, amazing accuracy. A substantial reason to expect the future prophecies to be fulfilled with the same precision. "Thy Word is Truth" (Jn. 17:17).

The first 35 verses contain approximately 135 prophetic statements, which have all been literally fulfilled in the order in which they were given (SEE: Walvoord, p. 269).

"In fact, this passage is so accurate that the liberal critics who reject the Biblical view of inspiration and of supernatural revelation have been forced to take the position that the passage must have been written after the fact; i.e. that the book was not written by Daniel, but by some unknown writer late in the second century B.c." (Walton, p. 84).

Verses 2-35 span from Daniel's day (536 B.C.) through the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (164 B.C.).

"Three kings in Persia" –

1) Cambyses (529-522)
2) Pseudo-Smerdis (522-521)
3) Darius I Hystaspes ("Darius the Great," 521-486; cp. Ezra 5 - 6)

"The fourth" - Xerxes (Ahasuerus) (486-465)

"Far richer" - SEE Esther 1

V. 3
"A mighty king" = Alexander the Great. This king is described as a "great horn" (Dan. 8:21) in Daniel's vision of the ram (Medo-Persia) and rough goat (Greece).

V. 4
"Kingdom divided . . . toward the four winds" - Upon Alexander's death, the Grecian Empire was divided up among his four generals (depicted as four horns -- 8:8 and 8:22; and in 7:6 as four heads on the leopard).

Cassander - Macedonia
Lysimachus - Thrace and much of Asia Minor
Seleucus - Syria [Cp. the King of the North (11:7ff)]
Ptolemy - Egypt [cp. the King of the South (11:5ff)]

When Alexander died (age 31), because he had no sons to take over the throne, a power struggle developed in the Grecian Empire. The generals fighting against each other, weakening the Empire.

(EX: Reports have it that the alleged crime boss and mafia leader, John Gotti of NY, has had his trials delayed to keep him behind bars so that the ensuing power struggles within the mafia will weaken it).

Verses 5-20 describe the see-saw, back & forth, relentless battles between the King of the North (the Seleucids of Syria) and the King of the South (the Ptolemies of Egypt).

"Because Judea was directly between the Seleucid Kingdom and the Ptolemic Kingdom, it was always involved whenever these two powers went to war. Through this period, Judea was dominated by one or the other of these powers" (Walton, p. 85).

The Chronology of these wars is as follows:

1) Seleucus I (Nicator of Syria) vs. Ptolemy I (Soter of Egypt) (11:5)

2) Antiochus II (Theos of Syria) vs. Ptolemy II (Philadelphus of Egypt) (11:6)

3) Seleucus II (Callinicus of Syria) vs. Ptolemy II (Evergetes of Egypt) (11:7-9)

4) Antiochus III ("the Great" - of Syria) vs. Ptolemy IV (Philopater of Egypt) (11:10-12)

5) Antiochus III vs. Ptolemy V (Epiphanes of Egypt) (11:13-19)

6) Seleucus IV (Philopater) vs. Judea (11:20)

II. THE WARS OF A SINFUL MAN (Antiochus Epiphanes) (v. 21-35)

Characteristics of Antiochus:

1. Self-Promotion (v. 21)

"A vile person" - a contemptible, evil man

"He shall . . . obtain the kingdom by flatteries" - "When Seleucus IV died, his son Demetrius, should have become king. Instead, Antiochus, the brother of Seleucus IV, proclaimed himself king. The honor of the kingdom was not rightfully his, but through scheming, flatter and intrigue, he gained the throne" (Walton, p. 87-88).

APPLICATION: Never force yourself into a position. Let God promote you (Ps. 75:5-7 - "Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck. For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another.")

He gave himself the name "Epiphanes" meaning "illustrious, shining one." His contemporaries, however, called him "Epimanes" meaning "madman." (SEE: Walton, p. 88).

2. Deceit (v. 23)

--False peace (v. 24a)

--False reform (v. 24b)
(redistribution of wealth to please the masses and gain support)

--False friendship (v. 27)

3. Unfaithful to his covenant (v. 28-30)

Antiochus, bent on going down to Egypt, is abruptly stopped by ships from the emerging power of Rome. With his plans thwarted, he then vents his anger on the Jews.

4. Contempt for that which is holy (v. 31-32)

"They shall pollute the sanctuary" - a pig was slain on God's altar

"They shall place the abomination" - an image of Zeus was erected

The future Abomination of Desolation (Mt. 24:15; Dan. 9:27; 12:11) will involve an image being erected in honor of Antichrist (Rev. 13)

V. 32

"Such as do wickedly against the covenant" . . . "Many shall cleave to them with flatteries" - Many apostate Jewish priests were to join with Antiochus.

The Bible speaks of an apostacy in the Tribulation (II Thes. 2:3). I believe that apostacy will be instigated by the Antichrist and his pressure to conform and yield to his mark.

"But the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits" - These in contrast to the traitors and apostates of Israel, will have strength to resist Antiochus [Men such as Mattathias Maccabeus and his five sons]

Where does such strength come from? Answer: In knowing God personally. (They knew His Law and respected their God)

V. 33

"They that understand . . . shall instruct many" - cp. 12:3. God teaches us so that we in turn might teach others.

"Yet they shall fall . . ." - God never guarantees protection from persecution, but He does guarantee His presence through it! (Heb. 13:5; Ps. 37:28).

V. 35

The divine purpose for persecution is three-fold:

1. To try - test (refined)

2. To purge (purified; to remove the professors from the possessors)

3. To make white (to make spotless) - Whiteness is achieved when the pressure of persecution drives people into the arms and mercy of God - SEE: Rev. 7:14)

III. THE WARS OF "THE MAN OF SIN" (Antichrist) (v. 36-45)

V. 36

NOTE: There are several evidences of a subject change between verse 35 and verse 36 (from Antiochus to Antichrist) -

1) This king is not designated as the King of the North or of the South (Antiochus was a King of the North - the Seleucid/Syrian Empire).

2) This king magnifies himself against "every god" (v. 36) and does "not regard any god" (v. 37) (cp. II Thes. 2:4), whereas Antiochus honored Zeus and set an image of Zeus up in the Jewish Temple.

3) A sudden, abrupt shift in subject and time period is very common in O.T. prophecies (cp. the shift from the King of Babylon to Lucifer - Is. 14; the shift from Prince of Tyrus to Satan - Ezek. 28) (cp. the "unseen time gaps" in O.T. prophecy - Is. 9:6; Is. 61:1,2; Zech. 9:9, 10).

   In chapter 8, the Lord warns of Antiochus (8:9-14) and then of Antichrist (8:23-25).

4) This king is alive "at that time" when Michael stands up for Israel (12:1) in conflict with Satan (Rev. 12:7) and when Israel's persecution and oppression is the most severe ever in history (12:1; cp. Mt. 24:21; Rev. 12:12-13).

5) Antiochus did not fulfill all of the details of verses 36-45. The Antichrist will.

   "The willful king of verse 36 is the Antitype of Antiochus. He is also identified as "the little horn" (Dan. 7:8); "the prince that shall come" (Dan. 9:26); "that man of sin ... the son of perdition" (II Th. 2:3); "that wicked" one (II Thes. 2:8); "Antichrist" (I Jn. 2:22); and "the Beast" (Rev. 13:1; Rev. 19:20)." (Walton, p. 91)

A. His Arrogance (v. 36)

   "His will" - Antichrist's desires will be controlled and directed by Satan (The Christian does God's will)

   "He shall exalt himself" - II Thes. 2:4 - "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."

"Shall speak marvelous things [unheard-of things] against the God of gods" - Rev. 13:5-6 - "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. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."

"Shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished" - God's indignation against Israel will be accomplished when the 70 weeks are transpired. Antichrist will have 3 1/2 years to prosper (Rev. 13:5).

B. His god (v. 37-39)

V. 37

"The God of his fathers" - God is plural in Hebrew, possibly indicating that the Antichrist will not be a Jew but a Gentile.

"The desire of women" - lit. the one desired of women = Christ [every Jewish woman desired to perhaps be the mother of the Messiah]

Antichrist will show contempt for Jesus Christ (NOTE: This interpretation is validated by the context, which is describing objects of worship).

V. 38

"The god of forces" = Antichrist will worship military might; and Satan, who is behind such bloodshed.

C. His Conflicts (v. 40-44)

V. 40

Before the mid-point of the Tribulation, when there are "wars and rumors of wars" (Mt. 24:6-7), before Antichrist has world-wide acclaim and authority, the kings of the North and South will come at him from both sides, attempting a pincher movement to destroy him. He evades such an attempt, however.

V. 41

Edom, Moab, and Ammon - cities in the wilderness that will evade conquest by Antichrist. Perhaps this is where Israel will find refuge in the Tribulation (Mt. 24:16; Rev. 12:14-16)

V. 44

Tidings of approaching armies out of the East and North will cause Antichrist to move back into Palestine to fight. To the unbelieving Jews, he will look like their Savior, their deliverer, their hero.

If they only knew how in a few days, he will be killed by a sword, will be resurrected (Rev. 13:3-4, 12), and then will break his covenant with Israel, and oppose her more intensely than any Holocaust previous.

D. His Palace (v. 45a)

"Between the seas" - the land between the Mediterranean Sea and Dead Sea is Jerusalem.

E. His End (v. 45b)

"Yet he shall come to his end" - he will be consumed by the brightness of Christ's coming (II Thes. 2:8; cp. Rev. 19:20).

"And none shall help him" - Though the "whole world" was for him, not a single person can help him when Christ returns.

God is in sovereign control over history. He limits the time of man's devices.

--V. 24b - "even for a time"
--V. 27b - "for yet the end shall be at the time appointed"
--V. 35b - "because it is yet for a time appointed"

CONCLUSION: