

Daniel's Last and Greatest Vision (Part 6)

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[0 : 00] Well, we are kind of in the midst of the, again, the final segment of the book of Daniel.

It covers three chapters in the book, the final three chapters of the book of Daniel.

Again, it is his last vision that God gave him. I think Daniel is in his mid-80s, maybe a little older, a little difficult to know for sure, but certainly by any standard, he's up there in years and very likely doesn't have too many years left.

And here at the kind of the twilight years of his life, God gives this, actually, this third and final vision to him, prophetic vision.

So that's what we've been looking at. That's what we have in the last three chapters of the book of Daniel. And we're going to work our way through this rather slowly because it's very significant.

[1 : 20] Not only do we find prophecies related to events that have already taken place for us, and that part of the prophecy we've already looked at.

For example, the prophecy concerning Persia, the power of the day in which Daniel was living, in that day in which Daniel was given the vision.

And so we've looked at that part of it. And then we've looked at the prophecies concerning Greece or the Greek Empire, which was the next great empire after Persia.

An empire that Daniel never saw personally, though he saw it a number of occasions through visions. And because it's been the subject of many of the visions and even some of the dreams that he interpreted, interpreted for Nebuchadnezzar.

And so we've looked at that and the prophecies concerning really the still the Greek Empire, but specifically two segments of that empire, Egypt and Syria, or the Ptolemaic and the Seleucid or Seleucus kingdoms.

[2 : 35] And then last week we looked at what the prophecy, kind of the, again, what I would call the climax to the prophecy, and that is the prophecies concerning Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

I've got that down now. As many times as I've repeated it. All right, so we covered all that last time. So these prophecies, up to this point, have all been fulfilled.

And fulfilled in really kind of staggering detail, really. When we look at the prophecies and connect them with the historical data, very specific, all of that has been fulfilled.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes is now dead and gone, you know, back 160 some odd years before Christ came into the world.

So that's all done. The prophecy, and this is why it's so significant to us. Significant, on the one hand, because it's always incredible to see that God's word is true.

[3 : 46] And it's always fulfilled. And every prophecy that he gave us in Scripture has either already been fulfilled or it will be.

And when we see that, especially to such detail, prophecies that have been given and fulfilled, then we can trust that those prophecies yet to be fulfilled, we can trust that they will be.

And so it has value on that level, certainly. But then, to have prophecies concerning things that are still future for us.

And that's what we're going to be launching out into tonight, because very abruptly, actually, this prophetic vision that Gabriel, the archangel, is unfolding for Daniel, describing for Daniel, very abruptly is going to move, you know, way out into the future.

Future for Daniel, yes, but still future for us. So that leads us then to number five in your outline, prophecies concerning the end times.

[4 : 56] The end times. Which are a future for us. We haven't reached the end times yet. Some of us think it's very close, and maybe it is. But we can't put a date on that.

We can only see symptoms of it, indicators, perhaps. And even that we have to be very careful about. Remember, Jesus said it's a wicked and adulterous generation that looks and seeks for signs.

And so we ought not to be out here, you know, getting our newspapers or turning on the news so that we can find some sign that Jesus is coming soon. We just trust, we know that he's coming in. Not just when he's ready, but when he has determined in eternity past that he would come. All right, so these are the prophecies concerning the end times, starting with verse 36 of chapter 11. Now, before we actually get into the prophecies in this section, let me just say a little bit about, first of all, about the context of the prophecy.

[6 : 03] The context. When I say context, I'm not talking about the context in which it appears in Scripture, you know, looking before and after. That's a very important process when you're studying the Bible.

Always look at the context. Where the passage fits in the Bible, in the passage, in the chapter, in the book, in the Bible itself. I'm talking about here more in terms of the historical context.

So, the context of the prophecy. And the first thing is, who is the prophecy about? Now, we already know, don't we, because I've already mentioned it a number of times.

So, I'm not suddenly just letting the cat out of the bag here. You already have an idea about it. But it's important for us to, I guess, look not only at the passage, but some other indicators that will help us understand that we're not just guessing about who it is.

We can know who it is. And so, who is the prophecy about? Well, verse 36, which begins this segment, this prophecy concerning the end times. Verse 36 of chapter 11 says, Then the king shall do according to his own will.

[7 : 11] That's how it begins. And then it launches out from there. You know, as you look at the passage, or really this chapter, you look at the verses that come before, it's not just real apparent that there is somehow now a new subject or a new person being mentioned here.

And so, we need to talk about that. I'm not going to get into all of the, really the tall weeds concerning why we can conclude that the prophecy is actually shifting to another time period. Because this has happened before a number of times in Daniel. Just suddenly, very abruptly, it moves to someone else, sometime else. And yet, on the surface, when we look at it, we can't, it's not really very apparent.

But it is pretty clear when you dig deep. So, we do have this king mentioned here in verse 36.

And the question is, who is this king? Well, the king is the one the prophecy is about. So, it doesn't name him. We've already been talking about a king.

[8 : 19] Antiochus IV Epiphanes was a king. So, is this the same king? Antiochus IV Epiphanes. And so, there are basically two, really just two views on this king's identity.

Really just two. You know, two serious views. I guess there probably are some really outlandish, way out in left field type views.

But really just two very serious views. And view one is Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Okay, so, there are those who hold that. That this isn't, I mean, we don't have something new, someone new at this point.

It's the same guy we've been talking about. The prophecy has been talking about. But, the problem with that is the historical data provided in verses 36 and 39 that are basically historical.

The historical data makes it really impossible for this king to have been Antiochus IV. such as the references made to the king's devotion.

[9 : 29] This particular king's devotion. His religion, his worship. Be another word to use there. Antiochus did not exalt and magnify himself above every god.

That's what verse 36 says about this king. But we know from history, Antiochus did not do that. Antiochus did not reject the god of his fathers as it says in verse 37 of this particular king in the prophecy.

Antiochus didn't do that. He didn't reject the god of his fathers. Quite the contrary. Antiochus did not say that Antiochus did not honor a god which his fathers did not know.

Verse 38. So these are three things that are said about this king. That he exalted himself, magnified himself above every god, every god.

That's what it's said about this king in this passage. We also know that Antiochus did not worship or excuse me reject the god of his fathers.

[10:43] These things that are said about this king don't fit with Antiochus. That's the problem. For those who want to say this is just simply Antiochus the fourth. To the contrary.

Just the opposite. Historically, Antiochus worshipped all the gods of his fathers. And there were many. the Greek pantheon of gods.

They had lots of gods. Their chief god being Zeus. All right. And you know, you've probably heard some of the names of some of the Greek gods.

If you've ever read any on Greek mythology and some of their principal gods and goddesses and so forth. And the fact is from history we know that Antiochus worshipped the Greek gods gods of his fathers.

In fact, if you will remember from our previous study and we also know this from history this is not just something that we guess about from some things said in scripture.

[11:50] we know this historical fact that it was an altar to Zeus the chief chief Greek god it was an altar to Zeus that Antiochus had erected in the temple and then required the Jews to bring sacrifice to him.

So, far from rejecting the gods of his fathers he very much worshipped the gods of his fathers. So, it doesn't fit. It doesn't fit according to the kings what we know about the devotion.

Well, we know what we know what's said about the devotion the religious devotion of this particular king as opposed to what we know about Antiochus his devotion.

Also, the reference made to this king's demise. And I wanted to use the word death but really there's nothing here in the passage that says that this particular king ever died.

It's a different kind of language. So, I'll say the king's demise. This king's demise in the prophecy the king of the prophecy. Verse 45 prophesies that this king will come to an end that's the language used in the scripture will come to an end in the region of Palestine.

[13:11] It will be in that area of the world. And verse 45 says and he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas that would be a reference to the Mediterranean Sea and the glorious holy mountain.

That's a reference to Israel specifically Jerusalem on Mount Zion. So, this king is going to establish his place of rule his palace his dwellings in that area.

This is in Palestine. Yet he shall come to his end and no one will help him and the implication is he'll come to his end there. Alright. But this cannot then be Antiochus the fourth because it's a matter of historical record that Antiochus the fourth died in Persia.

He died in Persia a specific place in Persia. Then the reference made to this king's days the days in which he will live also points to someone other than Antiochus the fourth.

Prophecies actually point to a period of time long after Antiochus the fourth lived and died and gone. Long after.

[14:30] In fact it's still future for us. So verse 40 says at the time of the end alright so these are the days of this particular king in the prophecy.

What days? Time of the end. Alright. The time of the end. That's the end times. Chapter 12 we go on in chapter 12 verse 1 a time of troubles mentioned there and we'll study those verses when we get to them.

The time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. I don't even have to explain to you what time is referred to there.

This is a clear reference to the great tribulation. Time that never has been in any nation and that time is in the end. The time of trouble. In fact there are other passages that speak of it as the time of Jacob's trouble and the trouble of Israel.

that's a reference to the tribulation predicted by Jesus in Matthew 24 21 which of course will occur just prior to the second coming of Christ.

[15:39] So we know this hasn't even happened for us yet. So it can't be Antiochus IV this king it can't be him he's not still alive certainly and he's dead and gone so this king is someone else.

Now with all that in mind then we have to go with the second view and the second view view two is the Antichrist.

The Antichrist that the Bible in a number of places predicts prophecies will come. The historical references that I've some of those that I've already mentioned as well as some others they fit with other prophecies that we have given to us in the New Testament as well as some in the Old Testament as well.

They fit clearly belong these prophecies clearly belong to the Antichrist and not this king who lived you know this little horn little little horn that lived back in a couple of hundred years before Christ. and so who is this Antichrist? Well the New Testament refers to him as the man of lawlessness man of sin the son of perdition 2 Thessalonians 2 3 to 12 in that area of scripture called directly the Antichrist but he is called this in a more official sense I mean there are references to Antichrists who will arise in history and there have already been some there are some today that are Antichrist but this is an official designation for a particular man who will come and be greatly used by the devil as Antichrist 1 John 2 18 also called the beast in Revelation 11 well throughout that segment of Revelation 11 to 20 alright so it's important to note then that this view has been widely accepted since the very early days of

[17:58] Christianity once taught in scripture I believe pretty clearly but then some of the early church fathers and theologians wrote also and held to this view that starting with Daniel 11 36 and on to the end prophecy that it's a reference to the Antichrist for example some of you may have heard of John Chrysostom pretty famous Christian from the third century Jerome another one that maybe you've heard of in fact Jerome for example wrote these words he said those of our persuasion not to talk about Christian persuasion but Jerome and Chrysostom some of those were part of what was called the Antioch school of theology where they where they approach scripture from a literal perspective that means exactly what it means so of our persuasion we believe that all these things the things in this passage are spoken prophetically of the

Antichrist who is to arise in the end times so this is what Jerome wrote back in 300 some odd BC AD excuse me alright so that leads then to a second thing concerning the historical context and that is when when will this prophecy be fulfilled I've already mentioned that it hasn't yet been fulfilled but when will it be fulfilled well your guess is as good as anybody's you know but think about it according to chapter 10 verse 1 when this last vision began to unfold for Daniel Daniel's vision came during the third year of Cyrus king of Persia alright we know when that was that would date the vision somewhere around 536 BC 536 years before Christ the prophecies concerning Antiochus the fourth were all fulfilled around 164 BC that would be 372 years after

Daniel was dead and gone so pretty incredible and the detail of the prophecy but you take that a step further prophecies prophecies here concerning the Antichrist have yet to be fulfilled of course these have not been fulfilled over 2500 years and counting actually I think the number would be it depends on where you place the birth of Christ 6 BC 4 BC there's a little variance there in the BC AD thing but depending where you put it I think it would be 2,564 years now since that prophecy was given concerning the Antichrist and it's yet to be fulfilled even today so the when well it doesn't really answer the question but we don't know nothing is given to us by which we could set a date much to the dismay of the prophecy people you'd like to have you know some date right there in scripture something really concrete but we don't know all right so that leads us then to the content of the prophecy starting with verse well actually yeah starting with verse 36 and continuing on through to the third verse of chapter 12 and we can divide this into three parts and we'll just barely get into the first one tonight the tyrant to come that's the first part of this the tyrant to come that's the first part of the prophecy verse 36 all the way to 45 really bridge the end of this chapter now what does the prophecy predict about this king that will come into the world who of course on the pages of scripture remains nameless but we know who he is his title is antichrist all right so what does the prophecy predict about him well two things first of all his evil character you know

I mentioned that Antiochus the fourth epiphanies was a type of the antichrist he was a wicked man a vile man the things that he did to Jerusalem sacking Jerusalem the Israelites that he murdered the desecration desolation really of the temple and all the way into the very holy of holies he was a vile wicked man and he's a type of the antichrist and so you know the type you know is in some sense similar to to the antitype in this case antichrist but the antichrist would be even much worse much worse so what about his evil character we can pick out of the prophecy at least three specific things related to the character of antichrist first first one is his pride his

I've called it royal pride you know his pride takes him to the extent of thinking that he's you know he's actually God himself verse 36 says then the king shall do according to his own will the king is antichrist we've already established that he's going to do according to his will in those days in the end of time he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god shall speak blasphemies against the god of gods that's god with a capital g and the god of gods with a small g alright that's Yahweh god so he's going to speak blasphemies against the god of gods and shall prosper he's going to be

successful in what he does till the wrath has been accomplished for what has been determined shall be done shall be done alright this is an incredible verse let's just kind of pick this apart first of all he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god you might you know look to the new testament and the writings of paul specifically in second thessalonians chapter 2 verse 4 where paul writes and he's speaking of the antichrist he who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called god and that's the antichrist very similar wording with what we find here in daniel 36 this antichrist when he comes he will oppose all that is called god he will exalt himself above so those are two things not only in opposition to the one true god but he's going to exalt himself above the one true god and not just one true god but all that is worshipped is god or that is worshipped called god or is worshipped so that he the antichrist sits as god in the temple of god showing himself that he is god so antiochus the fourth epiphanies had the audacity to set up you know an image an altar to zeus in the temple but the antichrist will go a huge step further he'll set himself up there in the holy of holies in the temple of god so that's part of the verse then we kind of go a little bit further in verse 36 what else will he do he will speak blasphemies this is what the passage says he will speak blasphemies against the god of gods now this is a direct reference to the one and only god god of the bible yahweh god he will speak blasphemies against him actually literally and there are some other translations that bring this out but he will speak monstrous things against god he will exalt himself above all gods all gods with little g who are worshipped in the world well all gods including the god he will exalt himself above them but his greatest hatred is going to be reserved for the god of all gods antichrist will place himself in a position where he will become the god of all religions in fact you could think of it this way he will be the messiah to the jews i'm talking about when he comes to power in the time of tribulation he will be the messiah of the jews at least for three and half years of the tribulation

[27 : 29] they're going to think he's the guy and of course he'll reveal that he's not then comes the great part of the tribulation but not only will he be the messiah of the jews in that time when he takes power in this world he will be the christ of the apostate church remember the true church won't be here the church that will exist the christian church will be an apostate church and the antichrist at least initially will be the christ for the apostate church he will be and you you may be familiar with some of these terms he will be the mahdi of the muslims he will be the christian of the hindus he will be the ideal of the humanists they don't worship a god right and yet they they do worship in a sense the ideal human the ideal he'll be the ideal for the humanist he will be the mantra for the eastern mystics and we could go on and on and that's just kind of naming some of the larger you know the the messiahs in a sense for all of the major religions of the world the antichrist will be the god for all people because he'll exalt himself above all other gods including the god of gods and so third third part of this passage and I don't think I broke this out in your notes so don't worry about it you can jot this down if you want to but third part of verse 36 is a very significant verse describing his pride he shall prosper till the wrath and I think I did

I don't know you might write down the word indignation as opposed to wrath probably a better word indignation he shall prosper till the indignation has been accomplished for what has been determined or decreed shall be done now what is that talking about well it's really kind of interesting antichrist will actually be deceived be deceived by his own pride and self exaltation because actually he will think that he's doing his own will when he's really doing the will of God in reality he will be God's will the word indignation is a reference to God's indignation not the antichrist! indignation so he's going to prosper going to have everybody hoodwinked going to be the God for all people and all of his time of power and all that will go with that will be completed when the indignation is completed God's indignation against whom Israel tribulation is not only God's judgment upon the unbelieving world but it is primarily God's judgment upon his people Israel it's the time of Jacob's trouble and so the antichrist is really though he thinks he's going to be calling the shots well actually in some sense thinking that he is doing the will of the devil he's actually doing the will of God the very God that he has exalted himself above and why why indignation toward Israel because they rejected Jesus rejected their

Christ remember what they said to Pilate when the Pilate said okay we'll crucify the guy remember what they said they said in Matthew 27 25 his blood be upon us and on our children and that very thing that they said is going to come home to roost one day and what's amazing is the antichrist will do the bidding of a sovereign God and bring all that about according to his will so first in his pride his royal pride second his religious policy policy number one for the antichrist verse 37 he shall

regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women which I'll explain here in a minute nor regard any God for he shall exalt himself above them all and that's his statement about that his you know his religious policy here's my policy

I'm it I'm it I'm above all gods but it's interesting first of all he will not grow up as a pagan I mean what is said here in the prophecy indicates that the antichrist whomever he may be we don't know who he's going to be he's not going to grow up as a pagan the phrase regard neither the God of his fathers it the phrase refers to the one true God that's why in most translations it's a capital G the God of his fathers so it refers to the one true God who is who will be worshipped by those in antichrist lineage it's a reference to how he was brought up he'll be brought up as a worshipper or at least his family family his lineage will all be worshippers of the one true God which leads some to think that he's going to be a Jew which he really can't make that that clear judgment because it says more than that because second

[33 : 36] I think there's a reference here that he will grow up in a Christian tradition a Christian tradition nor the desire of women which is kind of an interesting phrase I guess maybe some of us might look at that and say well he didn't have any desire for women that's not what it means it actually more literally would read nor the desire or the one desire of women all right so scholars say there's several ways this could go but most say that it's a reference to Christ it's a reference to Christ it's an expression it's a Jewish expression actually that relates to Jewish women Jewish women and their almost universal dream or desire to be the mother of the Christ and of course there was just one

Mary but we have to understand you know this time period the history of the Jews leading up to the coming of the Messiah which was Jesus Christ and really for some time beyond that it was the dream the desire of women to be the mother of Christ so this is a reference actually to Christ and so it leads us I think to understand that not only will the Antichrist that his upbringing his roots his religious roots will be the worship of the one true God but also it will come out of a Christian tradition and then third he will reject all deities as inferior to himself and so this is how that verse ends nor regard any God for he shall exalt himself above them all so he reject his orthodox roots worship of Yahweh

God reject his upbringing his Christian upbringing and he will reject all gods any and all gods because he will exalt himself above them all so that's his religious policy that's that's who he will be so his pride his policy and then third his real purpose his real purpose and we'll finish with this verse 38 but in their place their place all the gods place he shall honor a god of fortresses and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver with precious stones and pleasant things now who would be the god that his fathers did not know is satan satan will be in a sense his god though on earth he's exalted himself above all gods all that are called god but whether he's conscious of it or not he will be doing the bidding and he will be in a sense worshiping satan himself satan is going to be pulling all the strings here even though unknown to satan it's even satan is operating under the sovereignty of

Yahweh god so antichrist will take from satan what had been offered to Jesus this I think is an interesting observation what was offered to Jesus do you remember back when he was tempted in Luke chapter four five to eight all the kingdoms of the world antichrist is going to receive that from satan given the same same offer as Jesus was offered at the beginning of his ministry that was supreme power you know which kind of goes without saying supreme power under satan of course bow down to satan and the world praise worldly glory that's what satan will offer the antichrist and he'll take it same thing that he offered Jesus and of course Jesus did not succumb to that temptation all right so we're looking looking at the contents of the prophecy concerning antichrist his evil character and then next time we'll see his evil conquests he's going to be a conqueror the prophecy is going to describe some of that for us we'll cover that next time