

A pastor related this story: As a boy growing up in the country, I had heard scary stories about a snake called a “Black Racer” that would chase you. These stories kept me very alert as I walked up and down the gravel roads around where we lived. One day mom asked me to go to the neighbor’s house and borrow an iron because ours was broken. I started up the road with a watchful eye on each side of the road with its weeds grown up along the way. I could just imagine one of those “Black Racers” laying back in the shadows just waiting to sneak up on me and bite me. I borrowed the iron and started back down the road toward home when I sensed something was following me. I looked over my shoulder and sure enough there in the road behind me was a black snake raising up to bite me. I took off with all the speed I could muster. I ran to the house, almost unable to breathe, and when I looked over my shoulder – there to my amazement was the iron cord dragging on the ground behind me. I had almost killed myself running from an iron cord.

You know, sometimes we fear things simply because we don’t see them as we should – we don’t see them for what they really are. This morning, as we continue with **Daniel**, we are going to look at a very prominent figure in the end times – a figure who seems very fearsome, and yet, when seen from the right perspective – a heavenly perspective – our future perspective, we need not fear him at all.

Last week, we looked at 135 very detailed and accurate prophecies from **Daniel 11** – which were all future to Daniel, but from our perspective – they have all come and gone and are confirmed by history.

Now, when we left off last week, Antiochus Epiphanes – the king of the North from Syria invaded Egypt to the South. Epiphanes, with his mighty army, made their way down to Alexandria Egypt, but it was there that he was confronted by the Romans and given an ultimatum by the Roman Senate – turn back and keep the peace, or you will face the might of Rome.

Well, if you remember, Epiphanes turned back, and as he made his way north through Israel, in his humiliation, he vented his fury on the Jews. In 168 B.C., Epiphanes slaughtered thousands of them, and then to add insult to injury, he set up an idol to Jupiter – a version of Zeus in the temple in Jerusalem, he sacrificed a pig on the altar, and the sprinkled its blood all over the sanctuary.

The Jewish temple was desecrated, regular sacrifices ceased, and it was left desolate for several years. Daniel refers to this as the **abomination of desolation** or depending on your translation – **the abomination that causes desolation**.

Some two hundred years later, Jesus was talking about the end times with His disciples who had a few questions about the future, and in His lengthy answer, Jesus makes this reference in **Matthew 24:15**,

Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand).

Jesus was talking to His disciples about the end of times, and here He brings up the same phrase used by Daniel – the *abomination of desolation*. Now wait a minute, that happened two hundred years earlier with Epiphanes – that’s old history even for the disciples, but here Jesus speaks of it as something occurring in the future – something to look out for at the end.

So, from this we understand this prophecy about the *abomination of desolation* to be dual in nature – it was *partially* fulfilled by Epiphanes, but later, it will be *completely* fulfilled by someone else who is still yet to come – the someone else who is our focus for this morning.

We are still in the same chapter – **Daniel 11**, and we are going to pick up with a shift in prophecy, and let me explain what I mean by that. When we left off last week, Daniel mentioned the phrase “*the end time*” and we will see that phrase again – “*the end time*” – and it’s a phrase that moves us at warp speed to a different time, a different place, and a different scene – moving us from Epiphanes in the past, leap frogging over the church age because this is about the Jews, and then landing us right smack dab in the middle of the Tribulation period. I also believe this is a shift in prophecy because from here-on-out, the following passages do not line up with *fulfilled* history, and therefore, we must conclude that we will be looking at still remains *unfulfilled* – it’s still in the future.

So, if you have your Bible, let’s get back to **Daniel 11**, and before we begin – just to get us in the right frame of mind, these unfulfilled prophecies of the future we are going to look at come on the heels of 135 detailed prophecies that have already been confirmed as accurate by history. Again, I just wanted to throw that out there, and with that said, we are told this in **verse 36**,

Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done.

Right out the gate, the angel tells Daniel this king **will do as he pleases**, and from those few words we know for sure this is not Epiphanes because when we left off with him – the Romans were now calling the shots.

So, we are not talking about Epiphanes – he was merely the prototype of the one we are going to talk about – it's the *Antichrist*, who for a time – a time **decreed** by God, is given power and authority to do as he wills. **Now, how does that happen? How does he go from apparent obscurity to becoming a world dictator?** Well, I would describe it as the *perfect storm*.

First remember, the setting is the Tribulation period. The prophet Jeremiah calls this period *Jacob's Trouble*. It's Daniel's *Seventieth Week* – it's the remaining seven-year period for Daniel's people – the Jews – who still need to come to Jesus as their Messiah. The Tribulation period is for the Jews – and the church, who is not destined for God's wrath, has been taken up – it's raptured, leaving the world in chaos and confusion.

In addition to that, there's a defection – a falling away from the truth. Simply put, people would rather believe a lie and that's what they will get in a person, and lastly, the Holy Spirit will no longer restrain the evil forces. Yes, these forces are clearly at work now – but there will come a time when that restraint is removed, and deception and wickedness will rise to a whole new level – and when put altogether, it creates the ideal environment for the Antichrist to make his deceptive move onto the world's stage. Look at **Revelation 6:2**.

I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

When the Apostle John saw the first seal broken by the Lord in his vision, the first thing to get his attention is this rider on a **white horse**. Now, if our biblical interpretation came from old western movies, it would suggest this is a going to be one of the good guys – for we all know that good guys ride white horses, in fact, Jesus rides a white horse at His Second Coming, but this isn't Jesus – he just wants to look like Him.

This rider on the white horse had a **bow**, and a victor's **crown** was given to him, for he had the authority to repeatedly conquer. He had a bow, but there's no mention of arrows which suggests that he didn't go to war, he carried his bow, but didn't have to use it to be victorious. It's a peaceful conquering. That's how the Antichrist starts his career of deception. As a peacemaker, he emerges out of a

coalition of ten nations representing the *revived Roman Empire*, and if you remember back in **Daniel 9**, it's the Antichrist who brings about a seven-year treaty between Israel and her neighbors which triggers the Tribulation period.

Anyway, the world will love this guy because he is one of them and seems to have the answers to their problems, and out of this coalition of nations that he is aligned with, he will quickly assume *rule* over the world, and midway during his reign – that's where we have landed in this prophecy, he will also assume the *role* of God.

True to his nature, he **will exalt himself and magnify himself above every god**. At first, he will tolerate other forms of religion, but at the middle of the Tribulation period, he comes to Jerusalem, he breaks the treaty with Israel, he kills the two prophets of God outside the city, and then he goes to the temple and proclaims himself to be the sole object of worship – thereby becoming the *abomination of desolation* personified.

The Apostle Paul writes about this in **2 Thessalonians 2:3-4**. He says,

Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

This describes the very nature of the Antichrist. If you recall, “*anti*” means *against* but it also means *in place of*. The Antichrist is against Christ, but he also wants to replace Him – and this he will seek to do until the **indignation is finished**, until the outpouring of God's wrath is completed at the end of the Tribulation period. Make no mistake, God is still in control and as **decreed**, His purposes will be accomplished.

Now, in keeping with his blasphemous character, we are told this about the Antichrist beginning with **verse 37**.

³⁷ He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all. ³⁸ But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures. ³⁹ He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god; he will give great honor to those who acknowledge him and will cause them to rule over the many, and will parcel out land for a price.

We are told the Antichrist will show no **regard for the gods of his fathers** and just so you know, the Hebrew word here for **gods** is *Elohim* which is a general name for God – applying to the true God but also applying to false gods – any gods.

So, what does this mean? As you might imagine, this is open to several interpretations, but I think it means the Antichrist will reject his spiritual heritage – whatever that might be. I believe the Antichrist will enter this world just like any of us, and growing up, he will have some type of religious upbringing, but at some defining point in his life – for whatever reason, he rejects the religion practiced by his parents, he sells his soul to the devil so to speak, and he's possessed by a very powerful demon.

The angel goes on to say he will show no regard for the **desire of women** which is another phrase open to several interpretations. Some quickly jump on this and suggest this means the Antichrist will be homosexual or at the very least have a negative view towards traditional relationships. Now, that could very well be the case, but from what we are told here, there is some difficulty with that view because we are told it's the *desire of women*, not the *desire for women*.

Others suggest this is a reference to the desire of Jewish women to give birth to the Messiah – that was *their* great hope and desire as mothers – and taking that thought a little further, this could then be seen as his rejection of that hope. I will tell you that I'm not entirely sure what to make of this. It could be describing his perverted view towards relationships – that wouldn't be surprising, or when taken together, this could be seen as a rejection by the Antichrist of the gods of the past – as well as – a rejection of the Son of God who is yet to come.

So, the Antichrist **will magnify himself above them all** – that's a rejection of the true God as well as all false gods. He's to be the object of worship, and when it comes to his own devotion – other than the devotion to himself – he's devoted to the **god of fortresses** meaning he worships power – human power – materialistic power – the power to make war, and everything that his fathers gave in the past to honor their gods – things of value, things that were treasured, the Antichrist will take to build his war machine.

We are told the Antichrist will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a **foreign god** – a god whom his fathers did not know which may be another way of saying what the Apostle John later said in **Revelation 13** – that the power behind the Antichrist is Satan himself.

So, the Antichrist assumes *rule* over the world, and he assumes the *role* of God, but not everybody is onboard, and all hell breaks loose. Even hell can't get on the same page, and things begin to crumble. Let's continue beginning with **verse 40**.

⁴⁰ “At the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow them and pass through. ⁴¹ He will also enter the Beautiful Land, and many countries will fall; but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon. ⁴² Then he will stretch out his hand against other countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape. ⁴³ But he will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver and over all the precious things of Egypt; and Libyans and Ethiopians will follow at his heels.

At the end time – there's that phrase – in the last days, the king of the **South** and the king of the **North** will come against the Antichrist – and it seems by invading the Middle East – maybe Israel. Now, if you remember from last week, the South was identified as Egypt and the North was identified as Syria. In this passage, we are not told if these are same two nations involved here, but if they are, they likely have allies.

Anyway, the Antichrist is alerted to this invasion, and he will move his forces, probably from Europe, into the Middle East, sweeping through countries like a flood. He will move quickly into Israel, he will occupy the **Beautiful Land**, and he will engage these invaders. Once again, Israel will be stuck in the middle and many Jews will flee seeking refuge somewhere else.

We are told that **many countries will fall**, the forces of the Antichrist will be too overwhelming – he's occupying and plundering conquered lands to fuel his war machine, but for some unknown reason – **Edom, Moab, and Ammon** – which is modern day *Jordan*, will be spared.

We are not told why, but here's a wild thought – *Jordan* is one of the few Muslim nations who acknowledges Israel's right to exist. They actually cooperate with Israel, and many believe this where the Jews will flee to – to the mountains in Jordan, specifically to *Petra* – to the place where some believe God's people will find their refuge during this period.

Anyway, as the Antichrist continues to push southward with his forces into North Africa, he gets some disturbing news, and beginning with **verse 44** this is what we are told,

⁴⁴ But rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many. ⁴⁵ He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain; yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

The Antichrist, who's distracted with mopping up one invasion, gets the news of a huge army from the East crossing the dried-up Euphrates River and coming his way towards Israel – along with another army from the North, and ironically – according to **Revelation 16**, all of these nations are being influenced by demons. Again, hell can't get on the same page.

The Antichrist is alarmed by what he learns, he's enraged, and in his **great wrath**, he wants to destroy and annihilate them all – all of which sets the stage the last great and final battle.

The Antichrist makes his command post **between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain**. This is a reference to the valley between the Mediterranean Sea, the Dead Sea and/or the Sea of Galilee and north of Mt. Zion called *Megiddo*.

It's the valley of Megiddo – in Hebrew a place called *Armageddon*. This is a place where the nations of the world will gather their armies, and once gathered, then out of nowhere, Jesus crashes the party. The Apostle John describes it **Revelation 19**, beginning with **verse 11**.

¹¹ And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

¹² His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. ¹³ He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. ¹⁵ From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. ¹⁶ And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

The host of heaven show up for this great battle led by the Lord Himself. It's the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The Antichrist is seized by the Lord and thrown alive into the lake of fire. His reign comes to an end, and there is no one left to

help him because the false prophet – his right-hand man will be tossed into the lake of fire with him. Then after those two are out of the way, the rest on the battlefield who remain, will fall to the ground by the Lord’s spoken word.

In summary, I want to conclude by using a verse from the hymn “*Almighty Fortress is our God*” – and it reads like this:

*And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us;
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.*

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