

DANIEL — WEEK 13

THE END



F. Michael Slay
A DEEP Study

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The cover image is Daniel in the Lions' Den by Peter Paul Rubens

As we get to the end of Daniel's longest and most profound prophesy, things get creepier and creepier. Eventually, he's not talking about things that happened a couple of centuries before Christ; he's talking about the end times.

This part won't be clear until it happens.

We're pleased to provide *the DEEP* studies in PDF format at no charge. We hope you will find them helpful and encouraging as you press on in your journey toward spiritual maturity in the Lord.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. To subscribe to the daily DEEP email, visit our website at www.ailbe.org and click the sign-up button at the bottom.

There, you will also discover many other resources, including many email newsletters, such as our worldview study *ReVision*, our devotional newsletter *Crosfigell*, and *the DEEP*.

We are a spiritual fellowship patterned after the Celtic Revival. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

T. M. Moore, Principal
tmmoore@ailbe.org

Thank you.

All the individual weekly study guides are available for download here:

<https://www.ailbe.org/resources/itemlist/category/91-deep-studies>

Daniel, Week 13 — The End
Copyright 2021 F. Michael Slay
The Fellowship of Ailbe
www.ailbe.org

Except as indicated, Scripture taken from the New King James Version. © Copyright 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. ESV stands for the English Standard Version. © Copyright 2001 by Crossway. Used by permission. All rights reserved. NIV stands for The Holy Bible, New International Version®. © Copyright 1973 by International Bible Society. Used by permission. All rights reserved. KJV stands for the King James Version.

1 Daniel 11:11–19

“And the king of the South shall be moved with rage, and go out and fight with him, with the king of the North, who shall muster a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into the hand of his enemy. When he has taken away the multitude, his heart will be lifted up; and he will cast down tens of thousands, but he will not prevail. For the king of the North will return and muster a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come at the end of some years with a great army and much equipment.

“Now in those times many shall rise up against the king of the South. Also, violent men of your people shall exalt themselves in fulfillment of the vision, but they shall fall. So the king of the North shall come and build a siege mound, and take a fortified city; and the forces of the South shall not withstand him. Even his choice troops shall have no strength to resist. But he who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and no one shall stand against him. He shall stand in the Glorious Land with destruction in his power.

“He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do. And he shall give him the daughter of women to destroy it; but she shall not stand with him, or be for him. After this he shall turn his face to the coastlands, and shall take many. But a ruler shall bring the reproach against them to an end; and with the reproach removed, he shall turn back on him. Then he shall turn his face toward the fortress of his own land; but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.”

At the end of our last episode, the two sons (Seleucus III and Antiochus III) were preparing to fight against the king of the South. Antiochus III (AKA Antiochus the Great) eventually becomes the king but loses a big battle to the next in the Ptolemy line (Ptolemy IV Philopator, now king of the South).

But Antiochus raises an even bigger army and the tide turns yet again. Israel (*the Glorious Land*) is now *in his power*. He thinks he can cement his control by giving his daughter, Cleopatra (not **that** Cleopatra) in marriage to Ptolemy V Epiphanes, the next in line in Egypt.

No such luck. Cleopatra sides with her husband and Antiochus is repelled. After a few more military failures, Antiochus eventually *shall stumble and fall, and not be found*. The takeaway from all this is to notice how one king *will cast down tens of thousands*, but then that only lasts for a little while. Either the winning king will lose the next battle, or his heir will.

Tens of thousands of people give their lives and for what?

This passage should open the reader’s eyes. One of the lessons we see over and over in scripture is that many things aren’t as important as we think they are. Politics, whether of kings or of legislatures, sounds like the most important thing in the world. Not so. The NIV translation of Ecclesiastes 1:2 says it best.

“Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.”

2 Daniel 11:20–28 (ESV)

“Then shall arise in his place one who shall send an exactor of tribute for the glory of the kingdom. But within a few days he shall be broken, neither in anger nor in battle. In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given. He shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, even the prince of the covenant. And from the time that an alliance is made with him he shall act deceitfully, and he shall become strong with a small people. Without warning he shall come into the richest parts of the province, and he shall do what neither his fathers nor his fathers’ fathers have done, scattering among them plunder, spoil, and goods. He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time. And he shall stir up his power and his heart against the king of the south with a great army. And the king of the south shall wage war with an exceedingly great and mighty army, but he shall not stand, for plots shall be devised against him. Even those who eat his food shall break him. His army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. And as for the two kings, their hearts shall be bent on doing evil. They shall speak lies at the same table, but to no avail, for the end is yet to be at the time appointed. And he shall return to his land with great wealth, but his heart shall be set against the holy covenant. And he shall work his will and return to his own land.

This passage moves to something darker and creepier. It speaks of *a contemptible person* who will *come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries*.

This is about a guy who is so vile that he is widely considered a foreshadow of the antichrist—Antiochus IV Epiphanes. He’s also the little horn in chapter 8. His victories are strange, seemingly supernatural, and definitely evil. *Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, even the prince of the covenant*. Yikes. Who is the prince of the covenant?

There is debate over whether this is the high priest at the time (Onias) or Judas Maccabeus, but in any case, Antiochus is especially wicked. He even defeats the king of the South (Ptolemy VI), who has *an exceedingly great and mighty army*, by treachery. *He [the king of the South] shall not stand, for plots shall be devised against him*.

For what it’s worth, the king of the South isn’t much better. *And as for the two kings, their hearts shall be bent on doing evil*. But Antiochus wins the prize as the worst because *his heart shall be set against the holy covenant*.

Kings are often egomaniacs who cause a lot of death, but this guy doesn’t just want power; he hates God.

Once again, we see the fingerprints of spiritual warfare. Antiochus isn’t special; he’s a stooge for someone special. Still, his focus on opposing God is what identifies him as something more than just a common tyrant.

Antiochus couldn’t do all this by himself.

3 Daniel 11:29–39

“At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter. For ships from Cyprus shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage.

“So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation. Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. And 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 of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.

“Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done. He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all. But in their 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. Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain.”

Antiochus loses a series of naval battles (*ships from Cyprus shall come against him*) and has to retreat. This trips his wire and he takes it out on everyone else, especially the temple. *He shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage.*

The rest of the passage details the abominations he commits. These things would be worthy of major punishments (like 70 years of exile) if done outside the temple. Inside the temple, they’re off the charts.

This is sin on steroids. It’s amazing how people who don’t believe in God manage to blame Him whenever things go wrong. Antiochus Epiphanes is Greek and has no respect for the God of the Hebrews.

But let him suffer a humiliating defeat and guess who he’s angry with.

But it gets worse. Antiochus’s actions are beyond mere human evil. We’ve seen the relationship between spiritual battles and earthly battles throughout Daniel, and this one is the worst case yet. Antiochus Epiphanes is a foreshadow of pure evil. This prophesy is about to shift gears.

The rest of Daniel is different. It hasn’t been fulfilled (yet).

It’s about the end times.

4 Daniel 11:40–12:3

“At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through. He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels. But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

*“At that time Michael shall stand up,
The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people;
And there shall be a time of trouble,
Such as never was since there was a nation,
Even to that time.
And at that time your people shall be delivered,
Every one who is found written in the book.
And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,
Some to everlasting life,
Some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

*“Those who are wise shall shine
Like the brightness of the firmament,
And those who turn many to righteousness
Like the stars forever and ever.”*

“At the time of the end” means the end times, not Antiochus Epiphanes’s end. The last sentence of the first paragraph does not match how he died. Antiochus died in Persia, not *between the seas and the glorious holy mountain* (i.e., Israel). Antiochus didn’t invade Libya or Ethiopia either.

We learn little of importance here about how the antichrist will wage war on earth. Details, like that *the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels*, aren’t particularly significant. That *he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many* is no surprise to anyone.

But the spiritual battles in the heavenly realms are much more alarming—and interesting. Michael is identified as the archangel *who stands watch over the sons of your people* (Israel). His “standing up” just means he can’t sit this one out. That means they’ll need his help. *And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time.* The last nine lines are too much to repeat here but each one is a treasure. Deliverance is sure but determined by *who is found written in the book.*

There will be a great resurrection, and a final judgement.

5 Daniel 12:4–13 (ESV)

“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream. And someone said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, “How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?” And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished. I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, “O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?” He said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand. And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days. But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.”

Poor Daniel. He’s told to just *shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end*. Yet, he still doesn’t understand the prophesy. *I heard, but I did not understand*. So, he tries to at least get a summary of the ending. *Then I said, “O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?”*

No such luck. The command to seal the words is simply repeated. *He said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.*

Then Daniel gets a few final details—just as cryptic as all the others. There’s little agreement among the experts on what these details represent. So, what’s the point?

The answer is encapsulated in the cliché, “You’ll know it when you see it.” Right now, everything doesn’t make sense, but when it all comes true, it will. That’s why the angel said, *“Those who are wise shall understand.”* in the future tense. They don’t understand now, but they will.

The takeaway for us is that as bad as things are right now, this can’t be the end times because this pattern isn’t here.

We’ll know it when we see it, and we’re not seeing it.

Jesus did the same thing with his disciples. He said a bunch of things about his death and resurrection that make sense to us in retrospect but not to them at the time. Then when it all came to pass, suddenly all the dots connected, and they understood what he had been talking about all along.

So, as with all the other passages about the end times, forewarned is forearmed.

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. Cite a great "lost cause."
2. Have you ever known of someone who seemed supernaturally evil?
3. Why do non-believers seem to always blame God?
4. Do you subscribe to a particular view of the end times?
5. Do you crave more information about the end times? Should you?

Items for prayer: