



Ministry of the Word

Sunday 14th January 2018

by Vincent Gannon

Scripture: Daniel 11:1-11

Subject: Chapter 11, Part 34 – Introduction to Jacob’s troubles

If warnings could deter us from serious injury, then would we live without mishap? If God was truly believed in and listened to, then we would begin to know what wisdom is. Yet time has taught us one thing, we have raced through every red light and ignored the Creator to the point of our own destruction. The Psalmist even cried out to God, *“what is man that Thou are mindful of him, or the sons of earthborn man that You care for him?”* Psalm 8:4.

Right throughout the Scriptures we see that it is the Lord Himself who makes the moves towards us in judgment, mercy, love, forgiveness, and salvation, in the fullest and broadest sense of those meanings. The Bible is filled with hope and assurances with these two words, “but God”! In the darkest hour it seems, God shows up, and when He does everything changes.

In the text we have just read from, we can observe that the revelation that the Lord gave Daniel was not about a time of rejoicing but one that was a serious warning of a time to come when the Lord is going to allow a time of terrible tribulation for His people and the world will

be the object of his wrath. It was given to him simply, clear, detailed for everyone to see, know and understand.

The angel who was forth telling Daniel of these times to come, stated clearly that he was forth telling them from the book of truth of heaven in Daniel 10:21. The clock started with the current time Daniel was in which was with Darius ruling in verse one of this chapter, and then in verse 2 the survey of time was laid out in sequence, for the times after Daniel. The angel tells us without doubt, that history is not simply the happenings of men and chance, and a bit of luck thrown in. We are beholding the supernatural revelation of God to man as He has purposed it, to accomplish His will. Remember that the angel told Daniel that the vision “is for days yet to come” 10:14.

The preciseness of the prophecy is without doubt incredible. If I’m reading it right, there were to be three more kings to follow Darius, and the forth one was to be the riches of them all. However, it was not just the kings love of wealth but his love for war that tells us of the events that will follow. Here was a man that gambled it all away in an effort to gain power. The desire to be more powerful, is without doubt, greed manifested in the heart and what a destructive force it is. Little did this king know that he was simply playing into the hands of God and was a pawn in His hands. Not that I’m sure the king would have acknowledged that. He probably believed that he was a god himself.

Xerxes I, Old Persian **Khshayarsha**, by name **Xerxes the Great**, (born c. 519 BCE—died 465, Persepolis, Iran), Persian king (486–465 BCE), the son and successor of Darius I. He is best known for his massive invasion of Greece from across the Hellespont (480 BCE), a campaign marked by the battles of Thermopylae, Salamis, and Plataea. His ultimate defeat spelled the beginning of the decline of the Achaemenian Empire.

Did these events take place? did they happen? Yes, of course they did just as God had said, not weeks or months ahead but years, which was the forewarning.

The tell-tail signs were spelt out, he would be the “riches of them all”.

As you read down these verses you are reading really the “birth pains” before the “Abomination of Desolation” which in fact was in the coming of Antiochus Epiphanes 4th. This was not the telling of the final end but simply a foreshadowing of it. God revealed this to His

people, nothing is hidden or complicated, nor are we left to wonder at all. We might like an exact time schedule so that we can get ready in time for the Lords coming but God does not give us that and what a wise God He is. God wants us to trust him for our daily bread.

All that we read of here in these verses of Daniel came to pass, and we can look back and say, “Yes the angel was right, did all who hear, see and listen obey?”

Jesus, greater than Daniel, when He came and was asked about the end of times, He gave His disciples a very similar outline in Matthew 24. In fact, in the first 14 verses of that chapter He both generalised it and personalised it. In Daniel’s time, as in the days of the New Testament and even today, it is very interesting to note that the Jewish people as well as many others did not know and still do not know in two comings of the Messiah, they believe in the Messiah coming as one event, that He will come as Saviour and as Sovereign. The disciples thought that Jesus’ preaching, healing, comforting, rendering judgment, would all come at once like the prophets of old who saw the coming Messiah only as a single event and in a sequence of events like prophesied Isaiah 61:1-11. Remember when Jesus was asked to read from that exact passage in Nazareth that he gave the first clue that His coming would be in two parts? He stopped reading in the middle of verse two, omitting the phrase “and the day of vengeance of our God.” They missed not only that clue but many others. Just as in Daniel’s day, many did not seem to read the times correctly and as a result were taken off guard. That is why we need to learn from Daniel the importance of the “birth pangs” as Jesus tells us in verse 5 of Matthew 24.

Chapter 11 is essentially about the Judgement of God on Israel and surrounding nations. In the end, it will be Israel who will be central to the judgement of God and many during this time will be saved. It’s important to note this because the Jews thought they were free from Judgement and always wondered why they were being judged. Yet God showed them continually that it was their sin being judged. They depended on being the chosen people, they had the prophets, they couldn’t understand why or how the gentiles could be even thought of by God and yet Jesus told them that they had the prophets who they stoned and a great than Moses was among them, and they crucified Him.

Rather than reciting the history that we have previously looked at in our study of the book of Daniel, the “Abomination of Desolation” prophesied in chapter 11 is a different event to the

one that Jesus spoke of when He conversed with his disciples about the times of Jacob's troubles and the end. Jesus explained very emphatically that the first indicator will be like "birth pains". These signs of birth pains include False Christs, international warfare, Famines and earthquakes (verses 6-7). These are merely the beginning (verse 8). The figure of birth pains was commonly used by ancient Jewish writers, specifically with regard to the end times. The great modern Biblical scholar Alfred Edersheim wrote,

"Jewish writings speak very frequently of labour pains of Messiah" Labour pains do not occur at conception or throughout the pregnancy but just before the birth. And when that time comes the pains come with increasing frequency until the child is born."

A very important fact we need to remind ourselves of is often an event in history, is a model or a prototype for the end times. There is always the danger of confusing them with the real event that it is being foreshadowed. A former Chief Rabbi of the UK, Lord Sacks, remarked why in his opinion religion goes wrong, stating

"Sometimes it is because religious people attempt to bring about the end of time in the mist of time".

In order to avoid that danger, it was important for Daniel to make it clear that the time of Antiochus was not the end because people living then might have thought it so. Chapter 11 of Daniel is so important for this reason. The exact parallel in the new Testament is Luke 21:8-9. The constant danger is to get confused about events and times, particularly the end times.

An example of this, "bringing the end of time within time", is that of the AD66 the destruction of the temple and in AD132 the obliteration of Jerusalem with the death of 58,000 Jews. It may seem like nothing but it was the greatest holocaust in Jewish history up until then. Throughout history there has been the failure and constant danger of people failing to heed Christ's warnings. They believed that their time was the end, and this led to behaviour that discredited the Christian message. During WW2, there were many churches that believed that the activity of Hitler and Mussolini was the evidence of the end times, but they were wrong.

If we look at the end of his book, Daniel is directed as told by the angel that even some people would misread not only the times of Antiochus but even other historical events. Some would similarly make a futile attempt to bring God's kingdom by force of arms, see Daniel 11:14.

Daniel chapter 11 should not be read as a list of predications to be checked out against subsequent events in order to confirm faith, even though it does have this role. It was written to warn people in the future of the danger of misreading the signs of the times, and thinking that the end time has come when it hasn't. There is a problem in Daniel 11 and it is this, there is not a lack of information but quite the opposite, its overwhelming, and every bit of it like a piece that makes up the jigsaw puzzle.

Chapter 11 is the actual picture on the box if you will, and it's very important if we are to get things right, otherwise we will fail or be frustrated. The prophecy is divided up into 4 parts which is after the death of Alexander the Great when his kingdom is divided into 4 parts to his generals. Note that the only reference to the "end times" is in verse 35. But there is a divine system revealed in the chapter, let's look at it.

Part 1. Verses 5-19. The angelic messenger warned Daniel that in the first period, when the Seleucid king (Antiochus 3rd) occupied Israel, some violent Jews would rebel in fulfilment of the vision but they would fail. Presumably they were under the misapprehension that the end was near.

Part 2. Verses 20-28. The second part or period, would come when a cruel king from the North (Antiochus 4th) would sit at the negotiating table with the king of the South (Ptolemy 4th of Egypt) with their scheming hearts bent of doing evil. Yet the angel pointed out that this would come to nothing see verse 27.

"Both these kings' hearts shall be bent on evil, and they shall speak lies at the same table; but it shall not prosper, for the end will still be at the appointed time."

We again see that the wars and intrigues of these kings against Israel meant that the end time had not come.

Part 3. Verses 29-35. This was a very dark, dangerous demonic period if you like, when Antiochus who was enraged by Rome's limitations of his power in Egypt, vented his wrath against Jews who refused to join their compatriots in welcoming his imposing Greek culture on their land. We have already described the horrors, the whole sale slaughter, persecution that he vented on the people. One man driven by the devil with too much power is a force to be reckoned with. He brought an end to the daily sacrifice, desecrated their religious alters

by sacrificing pigs on them, turning the Temple of God into a pagan temple for Zeus. His out-rages were without doubt, abominations to any godly Jew. This led to the Maccabean wars that were successful in getting back their Temple. Horrific as those times were, they were not the end. Verses 32-35.

“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. ³³ 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. ³⁴ Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. ³⁵ 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.”

Even though Antiochus’s oppression of the Jews did not usher in the time of the end, Daniel predicted that the people of Israel would experience persecution, war, captivity, and death over an unspecified period, until the time of the end. (The nightmare of the Holocaust was yet to come and even then, it was said to take 1 in 3 Jews world-wide, while the prophesy of Jacob’s troubles is said to take 2 in 3, Zechariah 13:8&9

“And it shall come to pass in all the land,” Says the Lord, “That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, ‘This is My people’; And each one will say, ‘The Lord is my God.’”.)

The prophesy in this chapter does not provide the kind of deliverance that Daniel and his friends experienced in the earlier part of his book. His prediction is similar to the warning issued by Jesus to his disciples regarding his return and the time of the end:

Matthew 24:4-14:

“And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ’, and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many

false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one

who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

Part 4. Verses 11:36 - 12:3. In spite of this, there are many who think that all of Daniel 11 and 12 concerns only the time of Antiochus but it's not. In fact, it is worth pausing, to spell out what that would mean historically. Antiochus made another major attack on Egypt as predicted in verse 40, which was met with great success and it increased his wealth and power again as predicted in verse 43. However, on his return from that campaign, he met his end somewhere between the Mediterranean and Jerusalem, as predicted in verse 45. After that there would be a time of trouble in Israel, unprecedented ferocity, but the nation would eventually be delivered but this is after Antiochus.

Chapter 12 is without doubt regarding the end times, the very language tells us this. It is important to state that it does not refer to Antiochus the 4th as we will shortly see in the coming studies.

Not only that, but a time scale was given in chapter 12. Daniel was understandably concerned as to how long all this would last, and he was told that it would be for a time, times, and half a time (12:7). He was also told that roughly three-and-a-half years would elapse after the regular burnt offering was taken away and the abomination of desolation was set up in the temple area of Jerusalem (12:11).

If we assume that the fourth section has only to do with Antiochus the 4th than we will make the mistake of not receiving this book literally and seriously. Many have simply come to the conclusion that it is only historical and was written after the events mentioned here. This removes the miracles from the Word of God and to simply read it as history you will run into all kinds of problems, like the end times.

Up to verse 40, historical we can easily see how the picture unfolds, but this is a revelation from God to mankind not to a particular kind of man, for example - historians. You see the fourth period of Daniel is still to come in the future as verse 40 reads. Only the final period is the "end time". As in Daniel 8, the messenger of God uses this horrible king as a prototype of

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the kind of person who in reality will be more sinister and worse than this fellow. The man yet to come will want and will demand all to worship him as god.

Daniel 11, adds to chapter's 7,8 and 9, by giving us a fourth preview of the time of the end, and the final domination by the human enemy of God the last enemy of the North, the man of lawlessness, the beast from the sea who exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped.

Here we have not just the Book of Daniel or indeed the Gospels, and Epistles but the final Book in the Bible is dedicated to this very subject with the most glorious ending, Jesus wins.

Amen.