

## THE END TIMES

Daniel 11:1-12:13

Key Verse: 12:13

"As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."

The book of Daniel is a progressive explanation of prophecies concerning the destiny of the kings and kingdoms as centripetal elements which circulate around the Kingdom of God until the end times. Its plot and literature are beyond comparison. We cannot deny that we feel as if we are flying in the Milky Way while reading the book of Daniel. Chapter 2 is a general statement about kingdoms from the days of Daniel to the day of the coming of the Messiah, and its main idea is repeated several times. Chapter 11 explains the necessity of the coming of the Messiah. It is because fallen man's revengeful spirit and cruelty cannot save themselves. Fallen men only invade other nations and destroy men and nations for the sake of their own survival and self-protection. Chapter 11 explains well how fallen men are crafty and cruel. But they are utterly helpless. For example, the kings of the South and the North were originally of the same nation and both countries did their best to make a friendly alliance. But despite their intentions, they keep on fighting. When people become evil they become like the Devil because the Devil enters them. We can see in this chapter the Devil's activity. Men fight to live a better life. But to each the end time comes.

### I. God protects his people (1)

Look at verse 1. "And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him." This verse tells us that God keeps his people even when they became like a prey to a ferocious lion or political intrigue. Daniel chapter 11 mainly talks about the third empire, the Greek Empire, to explain the activity of the Devil behind human struggles. As we studied in chapter 6, Daniel was in the palace in first place among the 3 prime ministers, and under his command were 120 governors. Political struggle waged on the fact that the first prime minister had the background of a POW and a Jew. It was inevitable. Naturally all the high officials were united as one to eliminate Daniel, the first prime minister. Daniel was helpless. Daniel's only clout was faith in God Almighty. When he depended on God in prayer God put the Spirit of God into King Darius and gave him spiritual insight to see Daniel. King Darius was trapped by his own law, but he did not give up on Daniel. He was out to save Daniel to the end. From the beginning, in the book of Daniel, Media and Persia were used by the Devil to annihilate God-fearing people. In the Persian kingdom there were four dominant kings: Cyrus (559-530 B.C.), Cambyses (530-522 B.C.), Darius Hystaspes (522-486 B.C.), and Xerxes (486-465 B.C.). Xerxes is the same king who is mentioned in the book of

Esther. When Daniel prayed depending on God, God miraculously saved him from the den of lions and lionesses. In the time of Xerxes, the people of Israel once met a crisis of total annihilation by power-hungry Haman (Es. 3:6). But the Spirit of God came upon King Xerxes and also God was with Esther. Mordecai, Esther's uncle, did not sympathize with motherless Esther when she, by the providence of God, became a queen. Rather, Mordecai persuaded Esther to risk her life to appeal to the king on account of the deadly situation of the Jews. Finally, Esther said, "If I perish, I perish." (Es. 4:16) Through these two persons God saved the people of Israel when they were at a most critical moment of their history. This story is told to remind us of God's grace to his people.

## II. The power struggle between the kings (2-35)

First, Alexander the Great died young (2-4). Kings are divinely privileged men, established by God to shepherd God's children in the world. Therefore, they should do kingly duties. They should protect their people. They must protect his nation. Most of all, each king should be a good influence to his people and give them a good example to follow. But history proves that kings were nothing but fighting machines and in quality they were lecherous and abusive. They were not at all shepherds of his flock, like King David. Many of them were so fearful, that they depended on magic artists, even though they knew those witches were all professional liars. In light of history many kings fought for the sake of fighting and for sadistic joy.

In verse 3, "a mighty king" refers to Alexander the Great. He defeated the mighty army forces of Persia. He also invaded African countries and part of India. He conquered and controlled the kings of the world. But he could not conquer himself or control his emotional feeling. So he died young from his exhaustion caused by excessive fighting and immoral life, without an heir to succeed his kingship. As a result, the four generals--Antipater, Lysimachus, Seleucus and Ptolemy--divided the Greek Empire into four parts and each ruled a part. They should have lived in peace because they were brothers. But they kept on fighting. Alexander the Great reminds us of Proverbs 16:32, "Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city." A truly great man is not one who invades, conquers and kills the people of other nations. A truly great man is one who is disciplined to control his emotion and be kind to the gentle and the weak.

First, the kingdom of the South--Egypt (5-8). In this part, the kingdom of the South was Egypt, one of the four parts of the Greek Empire after Alexander the Great. But there was a problem. Verse 5 says, "The king of the South will become strong, but one of his commanders will become even stronger than he and will rule his own kingdom with great power." This verse indicates that the king of the South, Ptolemy I, was alarmed when he saw one of his officers was born superior to anybody in the world and

had the possibility of overtaking his throne. So Ptolemy I made Seleucus Nicator a prince, even though he was nothing but an able man from the mundane world. Then the king made him the king of Syria. In this way, Ptolemy I became king of Egypt, the kingdom of the South, and Seleucus became king of Syria, the kingdom of the North. At first, by the help of King Ptolemy I, the king of the South, Seleucus, the king of the North, grew and grew. So King Ptolemy I, the king of the South, and Seleucus, the king of the North, became allies for the power balance and they were good friends.

Soon, Ptolemy I passed away, and Seleucus also passed away. After some years, a new king of the South, Ptolemy II, realized that the kingdom of the North, now under Antiochus II, had become stronger than the kingdom of the South. So Ptolemy II, the king of the South, who was like his father in compromising, gave his daughter, Berenice, in marriage to Antiochus II to make a better alliance. After this, the king of the South, Ptolemy II, demanded that Antiochus II, the king of the North, divorce his legal wife, Laodice, and dethrone her, and make his daughter Berenice legal queen. The king of the North, Antiochus II, suppressed his romantic feeling and did so. The Princess, Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy II, had mysterious beauty. But she knew nothing about politics and the world of necessary evil men. So she could not make a better alliance between the South and the North. What was worse, her father, Ptolemy II, died. At this moment, the king of the North, Antiochus II, brought his legal wife, Laodice, whom he loved so much and missed day and night, back to the royal palace. But Laodice was not an ordinary woman. Laodice first murdered Berenice, the daughter of King Ptolemy II, and next she killed her husband, Antiochus II, the king of the North, by making him drink poison. She also killed a prince born to her husband and Berenice.

Ptolemy II was a king of Egypt and a very wise ruler. But his politics based on human relationships did not work. Rather it brought tragedy on both kingdoms. Here we learn that good will does not work in the political world. The good will policy of Ptolemy II only caused his daughter and son-in-law to be murdered tragically. As long as Laodice, the Queen of the North, wanted to be a king instead of being a queen, tragedy was knocking at the door. Human relationships do not last long. These kings or leaders must have their own principles and thought world.

Ptolemy II was gone. Now the king of the South was Ptolemy III, brother of Berenice (246-221 B.C.) He attacked Syria, the kingdom of the North, in retaliation for the murder of his sister, Berenice. Ptolemy III won the war. After the war, Ptolemy III destroyed all the idols of Syria and took all the treasures in the palace. He also completely devastated the fortress so that they might not get any lumber or wood to build homes. But this was not the end of the war among brothers.

Second, the kings of the North--Syria (9-13). Seleucus I was gone. After

several years, the king of the North, Seleucus II, attempted to attack Egypt, but failed terribly (9). The king of the North, Seleucus II, died from anger and distress after losing the war to the king of the South. After that, Seleucus III ruled (226-223 B.C.). He attempted to retaliate for his father's death and attacked the South but failed because the king of the South, Ptolemy IV, defeated 70,000 Syrian soldiers in the battle of Raphia near Egypt (217 B.C.). Ptolemy IV, the king of the South, did not pursue the remnants of the defeated army of Syria to the end. When he saw the Syrian army flee away like chickens, King Ptolemy IV became proud. He stopped fighting the war and began to enjoy wild parties.

Antiochus III, who barely survived in the war, came back to his capital city and mustered his Syrian army. After fourteen years, Antiochus III returned with a great army force to fight against the king of the South, Egypt (14). At that time the Jews were under the control of Egypt. So the Jews supported Antiochus III, the king of the North, by the help of the apostate Jews. Antiochus defeated the king of the South, Ptolemy IV, and conquered Palestine. (16) The Jews who collaborated with Antiochus III, the king of the North, were not liberated. They were again enslaved by Antiochus III, the king of Syria. The people of Israel suffered endlessly, being situated between the kingdom of the South and the kingdom of the North.

Antiochus III was too crafty. He won the war, but he was afraid of King Ptolemy IV and his army force. So he devised a plan to make an alliance with the South. The family of Antiochus III grew many generations in the kingdom of the North. Antiochus III was trained to be a man under many palace martial arts experts. But his inner man did not grow at all. Antiochus III was as fearful as a little boy.

What was worse, though he received a royal palace education, he did not know "woman." He was like Napoleon Bonaparte. In his smartness Antiochus III gave his daughter, Cleopatra, in a treacherous marriage alliance to Ptolemy V, hoping through her to control Egypt. But she behaved differently toward her father the king after marriage. She stood on her husband's side (18-19). Although her husband was but a boy, she loved him. They say that Cleopatra was exceptionally beautiful and womanly to her husband. They were the Greek version of "Romeo and Juliet." They say that if Cleopatra's nose had been a little flatter, world history would have been different. Under the guise of friendship, Antiochus and Ptolemy vied with each other in treachery. When King Antiochus III saw that his plan did not work, he began military conquest, making use of the military strategy of Alexander the Great. King Antiochus III invaded Asia Minor and Greece. But something unfortunate happened. Roman army forces were in his way. He was terribly defeated by the Roman army at Magnesia (190 B.C.). There the Devil went into him and he played the role of antichrist. On returning from Egypt, Antiochus III attacked Jerusalem and slew 80,000 people and took 40,000 and sold another 40,000 Jews to slavery

(29). When the Devil came into him he became a different person. He became a devil and a representative antichrist. Again the king of the North attempted to invade the kingdom of the South, Egypt. But at that time, the Roman fleet compelled him to retire. He vented his anger on Jerusalem and desecrated the temple with the help of apostate Jews (32-35).

### III. The image of antichrist (36-45)

This part tells us the characteristics of antichrist. Antiochus Epiphanes played the role of antichrist. He was godless and ruthless. The destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) by the Roman general Titus was another act of antichrist. The papacy as a world power (6th to 18th centuries), could possibly be presented as the antichrist. Mohammedan control of the holy land (7th to the 20th centuries), could be the rule of the antichrist. But the characteristics of antichrist are well-revealed in verses 36-45. Antichrist first and last of all exalts and magnifies himself above every god, even the Creator God. Man is born to glorify God and magnify his Son's grace. But antichrist has no fear of God in his heart. He wants to exalt and magnify himself, even through newspaper headlines by means of horrible evil-doing (36). They say that there had been many Jewish women who wanted to deliver the Messiah. They were pious and holy women of God. They say that the antichrist annoyed these holy women simply because they were holy.

There has been "Antichrist," singular. But these days they became "antichrists," plural. Antichrists exalt and magnify themselves. If they want to do so, they should be noble. But they are surprisingly men and women of low desires. They bow down their heads to money. Read verse 38. "Instead of them, he will honor a god of fortresses; a god unknown to his fathers he will honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts." Antichrists were idol-manufacturers so they might sell them to weak-minded people. They made so many idols that the author of Daniel says that they devastated the good trees in the forest. Antichrists are all men and women of big mouths. They fight with their mouths. They are so arrogant that they look down on people audaciously. One man, whose skin clung to his bones for the last 12 years, due to his anger, attended a church where random prophecy was delivered. The woman preacher tampered with the attendants to make them feel that they were like the holy angels. In this way the woman preacher captured them with her oriental shamanistic magic arts. Then the haggard man came back to his church and criticized his pastor and his elders in the middle of the night for three hours and forty minutes screaming, glaring at them. Since then he went from house to house to visit those whose minds are weak and persuaded them until they became the angels who abandoned God's mission. The antichrists are like the people of the kingdom of the South and the kingdom of the North, who kept fighting (40-41).

Worst of all, antichrists, with their lying spirit, control people's money and keep their minds in submission (42-43). As a result, they cause people great loss. The antichrists usually focus on church members because they are attentive. But they will be judged according to their evil doing (45b).

#### IV. The end times

Many scholars entitled Daniel chapter 12 "the end times." When we observe this title very carefully, it is not "the end time" but "the end times." Therefore, this chapter is not focused on the second coming of Jesus Christ as the people believe in the churches where random sermons are delivered to make people slaves of fear. We must know that this verse clearly indicates the characteristics of the time of the end of the world. Before creation there was no space and time. There was eternity. But because of one man's disobedience and sin, the world was limited in time and space. For example, there is a time to be born and a time to die (Ecc 3:2). The gist of this verse is there is a beginning time and an ending time. People of the world, especially kings of the world, wanted to live forever and make their kingdom everlasting. But they are all in the limit of time and space.

This part is possibly the epilogue of the book of Daniel and the conclusion of chapter 11. The sign of the end of the world is immorality and violence, lawlessness, amorality and no value system, especially overwhelming violence and distress. If there is anything at the end of the world, philosophically speaking, it is the desire to be couch potatoes. They want to be at ease in abundance. But they cannot enjoy their pleasures because the sign of the end of the world will be a time of distress and catastrophe and wars and rumors of wars and formidable events.

But God protects his holy saints through his archangel Michael (12:1). Also, in the midst of unbearable distress and suffering at the end of the world, the holy saints will rejoice, realizing that their names are found and written in the Book of Life. Not only so, they rejoice in the hope of rising again from the grave (John 5:25). It always seems that the holy saints are an absolute minority. But Daniel saw that there are multitudes who inherit everlasting life with their King Jesus Christ. Read verse 2. "Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt." In the world, the holy saints are considered to be weird people and uneconomical and self-torturing people. Most of all, the holy saints are known as stupid people, simply because they are not selfish but live a sacrificial life of faith, following the footsteps of Jesus Christ. But God sees them, that they are wise. And they will be clothed in shining glory. Read verse 3. "Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for

ever and ever." They will inherit the kingdom of God, which is like the brightness of heaven. They will be heirs with God and co-heirs with Jesus Christ (Romans 8:17). They will be like the stars for ever and ever. Do not misunderstand, they will not be like movie stars, but stars of God and the stars of the Lamb. They will be purified, made spotless and refined (12:10). During the time of pilgrimage, they looked tired and wrinkled. Now they are going to look like heavenly princes and princesses.

How about the godless? As we know well, the sign of godless men is a proud mind. Until now, they lived with no fear of God. They thought they would live forever. They thought they would ridicule others with their achievements forever. But verse 2b says the godless will go to the place of "shame and everlasting contempt." There are many things in the world which make man unhappy. A stupid person is unhappy because he is stupid. A smart person is unhappy because he is frequently outsmarted by his own craftiness. Rich people are unhappy because they feel they are born to pay excessive taxes. There are many things which make man unhappy. But according to Genesis, the very thing that make a man most unhappy is to be put to shame. Before disobedience and sin, Adam didn't have a sense of shame. But after disobedience, a sense of shame came to him and he found he was naked before a beautiful woman and he tried to cover his secret place even with the leaves of a tree (Gen 3:7). God made man noble. But the godless will be put to shame, in the place of contempt for ever and ever. Those who have no sense of shame are less than third class animals.

When Daniel heard something about the end times, there was a voice saying, "Daniel, close up and seal the word of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge" (12:4). The meaning of this verse is very simple. We must keep this secret in our hearts and work hard to spread the mystery and the knowledge of the gospel.

Daniel was so startled at the vision of the end times. He did not know where he was. When he looked around he was on the bank of the river. There he saw a man clothed in linen who was above the waters of the river. So Daniel asked, "How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?" (5-6) He answered, "It will be for a time, times and half a time." This means the end times will be one time or they will be time and again. In other words, it is a secret.

Look at verse 12. "Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of 1,335 days." In this verse there is the number 1,335 days. It simply means a long time. For example, to those who are living in great distress, or in prison, even thirty minutes or an hour will be a long time. How much more difficult to persevere the signs of the end of the times. 1,335 days are quite a long time. Therefore, this number signifies "The Endurance of the Saints." Saints must be patient like the

5 virgins who were waiting with their lamps filled with oil and whose wicks had been trimmed, overcoming sleepiness, remaining faithful to the Son of Man (Matt. 25:1-13). Look at verse 13. "As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance." As this verse teaches us, we must remain faithful to God to the end. We must go our way living by faith to the end. Then at the end, God will help us to rise to receive his kingdom as our inheritance.

In this passage we learn that we should not be like people who deceive and are deceived (2 Ti 2:13). We should not be like brutal kings who only engage in fights to destroy others and revenge others and retaliate against those who had wronged them. We must live like holy saints before the holy God. Daniel is the best example of one who lived a holy life in the troubled world. May God help us to live like Daniel.

#### PTOLEMIES AND SELEUCIDS

Ptolemy I Lagi Soter  
(323-285 B.C.)

Seleucus I Nicator  
(311-280 B.C.)

Ptolemy II Philadelphus  
(285-246)

Antiochus I Soter  
(280-261)

Ptolemy III Euergetes I  
Theos....[m.] ....Laodice  
(246-221)

Berenice. ..[m.]....Antiochus II  
(261-246)

Ptolemy IV Philopator  
(221-203)

Seleucus II Callinicus  
(246-226)

Antiochus III (the Great)  
Seleucus III Ceraunus  
(226-223)  
(223-187)

Ptolemy V Epiphanes..[m.]..Cleopatra I Antiochus IV Epiphanes  
Seleucus IV Philopator

(203-181)

(175-164)

(187-175)

Ptolemy VI Philometor  
Demetrius I

Antiochus V Eupator

(181-146)  
(162-150)

(163-162)