

Strong In Spirit: Part II - Daniel Study - Chapter 12

There is a lot of information to be digested in this lesson. Take your time to discuss the points where needed. Let the Spirit of God speak to your heart. Practically, it may be best to read the chapter first. Then, use the bullet points for clarification and discussion.

God Provides an Answer to the Vision

Read Daniel 11:2-12:13. The prophecy in this chapter is very detailed about events in the future. The accuracy and fulfillment of these events have led many skeptics to believe that this portion of Daniel was written by someone else after all the events occurred, but I am not a skeptic!

Here are some thoughts on the historical fulfillment of this vision:

- The answer to the vision
 - Addresses Israel's history with the Medes/Persians, Greeks, Romans and is linked to the end times. This is consistent with the dreams and visions of this book in chapters two and eight.
 - Very detailed about specific battles and the intrigue happening behind the scenes.
- The kings of the south were Egyptian kings and, to the north, Syrian kings. After Alexander the great died, his kingdom was divided into four smaller kingdoms, but only two (Egypt and Syria) of the four had real impact in world events.
- Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 BC) is the Syrian king mentioned in chapter 11:21-35. His nickname was Epimanes which meant "mad man." Verse 21 describes him as "contemptible or despicable." As the king of Syria, he gained control of Jerusalem. He so desired to eliminate Jewish religious culture that he made an edict that all people had to worship the Greek gods. He then stopped the temple sacrifices, hired harlots to perform sexual acts inside the temple, sacrificed pigs to Greek gods, banned the study of the Torah and circumcision, erected a pagan altar to Zeus over the temple altar, and Jews were commanded to follow or be put to death. Antiochus sat on the altar of Zeus and claimed himself god. This was the "abomination that caused desolation." Antiochus is the picture of the future anti-Christ that will set himself up as God by desecrating the temple, spewing insults toward the God of Heaven and claiming to be God. Read Matthew 24:15 and 2 Thessalonians 2:4.
- In verse 32 it says, "but the people who know their God will firmly resist him (Antiochus). A priest named Mattathias and his son, Judah Maccabee, led a series of revolts against Antiochus and retook Jerusalem. Many lost their lives in fighting the Syrians, but by the power of God they were victorious. Once they secured Jerusalem, they cleansed the temple of the pagan sacrifices and rededicated it. While Syria was in control, the menorah, or eternal light, in the temple had been extinguished. Judah ordered the lamp to be relit for the rededication ceremony that lasted eight days, but there was only

enough oil for a short period of time. Miraculously the lamp stayed lit for all eight days. This deliverance is celebrated every year in the tradition known as Hanukkah or Feast of Dedication.

- Chapter 11:36-45 probably refers to both Antiochus Epiphanes and the anti-Christ. Here are some characteristics to expect when anti-Christ takes his place on earth:
 - The anti-Christ will exalt himself over all gods, Daniel 11:36,37.
 - He will do as he pleases and act as an absolute dictator.
 - He will say unheard things against the God of Heaven, Daniel 11:36.
 - He will show no regard for anyone or any god, Daniel 11:37.
 - He will be a man of war and will honor the god of fortresses, Daniel 11:37.
 - He will honor those who follow him and reward them with power and prosperity, Daniel 11:39.
 - He will claim that he alone is to be worshipped and set himself in the temple proclaiming that he is God.
 - He will conquer much of the earth, including Israel, Daniel 11:40-44.
 - He will come to an end with no one to help, Daniel 11:45, Revelation 19:11-20:10.
 - For more information from scripture about the anti-Christ, read Revelation 12 and 13, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 and 1 John 2:18.
- The end times will be a time like never seen before on the earth, Daniel 12:1. For more on the end time disasters, read Revelation 6-19 and Matthew 24.

In summing up the Great Tribulation period you can expect these things:

- There will be a world leader, the anti-Christ, who will establish a one world government and religion.
- He will bring peace for three and a half years, after which he will claim himself to god and wreak havoc on the earth.
- God will be pouring out His wrath upon the earth and there will be destruction like never before.
- At the end, Jesus will come with His angels and gather all believers both dead and alive to Him.
- His coming will be distinct. He will come through the clouds with a great trumpet blast. The whole earth will witness his second coming. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

TALKING POINTS: STRONG IN SPIRIT: PART II

Main thought:

Knowing how things will end provides wisdom for interpreting world events.

Key Scripture:

Daniel 11:31-45

Discussion questions:

1. The whole world will see the second coming of Christ. Discuss what that will be like.

2. Discuss any insight you learned during this study.

The Armor of God

- Belt of Truth: Just as a Roman soldier's belt anchored his physical pieces of armor,

God's truth secures all the pieces of our spiritual armor.

- Breastplate of Righteousness: Guard your heart with the righteousness that is credited by faith in and obedience to Jesus Christ.
- Sandals of Peace: Proper footwear provides perfect balance and readiness. Our feet must be fitted with footwear that comes from the gospel of peace.
- Shield of Faith: Satan shoots lies at us like fiery arrows. Our faith in Jesus Christ stands like a shield, deflecting the devil's attacks.
- Helmet of Salvation: The helmet protects the most important part of the body. Our minds are protected by the redemption of our sins through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.
- Sword of the Spirit: We fight with specific Scriptures from the word of God, which is the Bible illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

Bible Reference:

Revelation 19



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8701 Leeds Road | Kansas City, MO 64129 | 800.289.0909
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