

DANIEL'S FINAL VISION & THE ANTICHRIST

JOEL RICHARDSON

If one consults the overwhelming majority of conservative commentaries on Daniel 11, the chapter is most often interpreted according to the following chart:

11:2	11:3	11:4-20	11:21-35	11:36-45
Medo-Persian Kings	Alexander the Great	Seleucid and Ptolemaic Kings	Antiochus IV Epiphanes	Antichrist

For many years my position, along with the majority of conservative futurist commentators, has been in full agreement with this chart. I used to understand Daniel 11:21-35 as being entirely fulfilled in the life of Antiochus Epiphanes. My perspective was that while some of the passage foreshadowed the future career of Antichrist, nothing in verses 21-35 should be understood as fully applying to the Antichrist. But I now have embraced the view that while verses 21-35 do find a partial historical fulfillment in Antiochus Epiphanes, their ultimate fulfillment should be understood as pertaining to the Antichrist. The implications of this interpretation are absolutely stunning as it gives us an extremely detailed prophecy concerning the career of the Antichrist.



Now allow me to explain why I think this position cannot be avoided.

Daniel 10-12: Daniel's Final Vision

First, a proper understanding of Daniel 11 must begin by acknowledging that chapters 10-12 are a single unit forming Daniel's Final Vision. The modern chapter divisions were introduced much later. But because of the chapter divisions, many miss the fact

that chapter 12 is simply an angelic explanation of the things described in chapter 11. Let's look at chapter 12:

“Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And **there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time**; and **at that time** your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. (Daniel 12:1)

Notice that chapter 12 begins with the angel saying, “Now at that time.” At what time? The time just described in chapter 11, of course. What the angel then explains relates to the same time as the events just described in Daniel 11. At this point, most conservative futurists commentators will say that the application of the phrase “at that time” is limited only to vv. 11:36-45, which is speaking of the Antichrist. But as we consider the angel's words, we will see that this limitation is impossible.

JEREMIAH 30: JACOB'S TROUBLE

First, we must recognize that this introductory comment by the angel actually paraphrases from a portion of the prophecy of Jeremiah:

‘Alas! for that day is great, **there is none like it**; and it is the time of Jacob's distress, **but he will be saved from it.** (Jeremiah 30:7)

Notice that both Daniel 12:1 and Jeremiah 30:7 share the three common features:

- (1) There is a time of unparalleled distress,
- (2) Which is specifically for the Jewish people,
- (3) But they will be rescued or saved out of it.

**there will be a time of distress
such as never occurred
since there was a nation until that time;
and at that time your people ...
will be rescued.
(Daniel 12:1)**



**‘Alas! for that day is great,
there is none like it;
and it is the time of Jacob’s distress,
but he will be saved from it.
(Jeremiah 30:7)**



ISAIAH 26

But the angel was not merely harkening back to Jeremiah, he was also drawing from Isaiah 26. For in his description of what this deliverance or salvation would entail, is the resurrection of the dead:

Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. (Daniel 12:1-2)

Now we must also recognize that any Old Testament literate Jew, upon hearing the words of the angel here, would have immediately gone to Isaiah 26. This passage begins with Israel bemoaning the fact that despite their great suffering, which is likened to the pains of child birth, they had not brought about the redemption of the World:

We were pregnant, we writhed in labor, we gave birth, as it seems, only to wind. We could not accomplish deliverance for the earth, nor were inhabitants of the world born. (Isaiah 26:18)

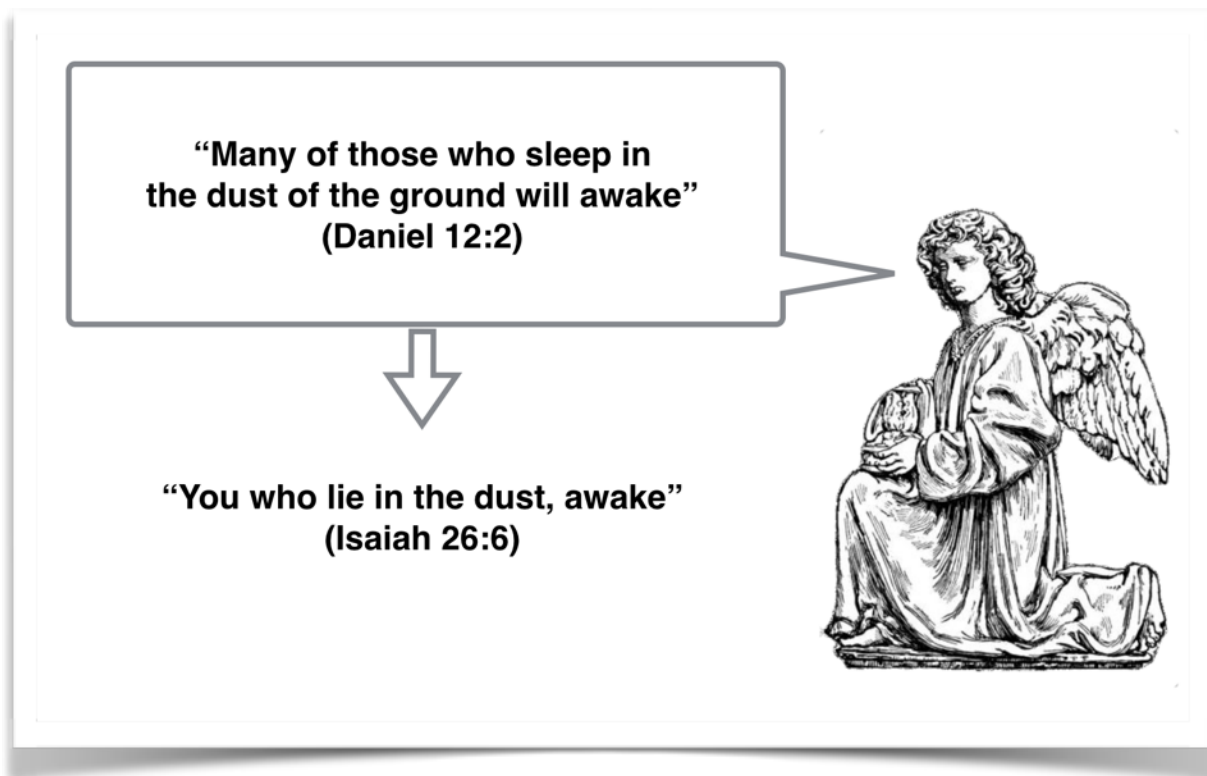
But the Lord interrupted their complaint with the promise that the day will come when their sufferings / labor pains will in fact bring about the resurrection of the dead:

*Your dead will live; their corpses will rise. **You who lie in the dust, awake** and shout for joy, for your dew is as the dew of the dawn, and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits. (Isaiah 26:19)*

It is impossible to deny that the angel was directly referencing Isaiah 26. Consider a comparison of the two verses:

“You who lie in the dust, awake” (Isaiah 26:6)

“those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake” (Daniel 12:2)



THE PRETERIST PERVERSION

As a side note, we must highlight here the interpretation of Philip Mauro, a highly influential father among modern Preterists. In his book *The Seventy Weeks and the Great Tribulation*, Mauro, who interprets Daniel’s prophecies as having been fulfilled in 70 A.D. is actually forced to deny that the words of the angel in Daniel 12:2 have anything to do with the resurrection of the dead, but refer merely to a spiritual awakening. Sadly, many in the Church today have embraced Preterism and its hopelessly flawed approach to understanding prophecy.

As we saw earlier with Jeremiah 30, so also here in Isaiah 26 are the three common features of:

- (1) A time of great suffering,
- (2) which is specifically for the Jewish people,
- (3) but they will be saved out of it (in this case, through the resurrection of the dead).

So the angel's words tie in the events of Daniel 11 to (1) the time of unparalleled distress (2) for the Jewish people (3) that will result in the resurrection of the dead (4) and the redemption of the whole World. How could this be about anything other than the end times when Jesus returns?

It is deeply saddening that Christians who have embraced Preterism, eager to see 70 A.D. as the fulfillment of these prophecies, interpret one of the greatest catastrophes in Jewish history, with the death of 1.5 millions Jews, to be the fulfillment of a prophecy that pertains to the redemption of the earth. *This is only one reason why I say that Preterism is a fundamentally anti-Semitic method of interpretation.*

THE END OF TIME

*"But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until **the end of time**; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase." (Dan 12:4)*

Daniel is then told to seal up the words of the scroll. This is not only a literal sealing, but it is also a prophetic act, speaking to the fact that this vision would not be fully understood until "the end of time," only after many have gone over and over this book seeking spiritual insight into its message. Again, is there any reasonable basis to understand 70 A.D. as "the end of time?"

THREE AND A HALF YEARS

Now we come to the most critical aspect of chapter 12 as it pertains to the proper interpretation of chapter 11. It begins with two more angels conversing with the first:

*Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river and the other on that bank of the river. And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "**How long will it be until the end of these wonders?**" I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for **a time, times, and half a time**; and **as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people**, all these events will be completed. (Dan 12:5-7)*

There are a couple of key elements of this passage. The first is the question, “How long will it be until the end of these wonders?” This question sets the context for the answer, which is actually two-fold. The end of these wonders (the events described in Daniel 11 as well as the time of unparalleled tribulation and the resurrection of the dead described in 12:1-2) will be “a time, times and half a time” or three and a half years. As we know from the Book of Revelation, this 3.5 year time period is just prior to the return of Jesus. Also, it will be accomplished, “as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people” (the Jewish people).

Daniel, for his part is greatly perplexed, and though he seeks to better understand the angel’s words, they essentially tell that it is not his to understand. Instead, the words would only be understood in the “end time”:

*As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, “My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?” He said, “Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up **until the end time**. (Dan 12:8-9)*

DANIEL 11:33-35

But before completing the revelation, the angel gives Daniel (and us) two more critical details concerning the timing. It is absolutely essential that we pay attention to this.

“Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. (Dan. 12:10)

Here, the angel is summarizing, and even quoting directly from Daniel 11:33-35.

“Those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days. Now when they fall they will be granted a little help, and many will join with them in hypocrisy. Some of those who have insight will fall, in order to refine, purge and make them pure until the end time; because it is still to come at the appointed time. (Dan. 11:33-35)

**“Many will be purged, purified and refined,
but the wicked will act wickedly;
and none of the wicked will understand,
but those who have insight will understand.
(Dan. 12:10)**



**“Those who have insight among the people
will give understanding to the many...
Some of those who have insight will fall,
in order to refine, purge and make them pure
until the end time...
(Dan. 11:33-35)**



What is essential to take note of here is that the angel has taken a section of chapter 11 that most commentators place in history and has placed it in the end time, within the same timeframe as the resurrection of the dead. Whereas most commentators do not see a transition from Antiochus to the Antichrist until verse 36, the angel has now shown that it is speaking of the Antichrist at least back to verse 33.

THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

But it is the angel's next statement that is the most critical to take note of:

“From the time that **the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up**, there will be 1,290 days. (Dan 12:11)

When the angel mentions the “ceasing of offerings” and the “abomination of desolation,” what is he referencing? *Obviously, it is a reference to the abomination of desolation and the ceasing of offerings that were just described in the same prophecy, in Daniel 11:31!* The angel is actually quoting from verse 31 verbatim. Daniel 11:31 is the only place in where these specific phrases “the ceasing of offerings” (Hebrew: *taymid taymid cuwr*) and “the abomination that causes desolation (Hebrew: *shiqquwts shamen*) are used:

*“Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with **the regular sacrifice**. And they will **set up the abomination of desolation**. (Daniel 11:31)*

**From the time that
the regular sacrifice is abolished and
the abomination of desolation is set up,
there will be 1,290 days.
(Dan 12:11)**



**Forces from him will arise,
desecrate the sanctuary fortress,
and do away with the regular sacrifice.
And they will set up
the abomination of desolation.
(Daniel 11:31)**



Again, the problem, as I mentioned at the beginning of this article is that the overwhelming majority of conservative commentators interpret this verse as pertaining to Antiochus Epiphanes and not Antichrist. Again, most conservative commentators do not see Antichrist as being in view until verse 36. And this is how I always understood it. But according to the angel's interpretation, the Antichrist is in view all the way back to 11:31. Yet the individual who is the subject of verse 31 is obviously the same person that was began being described all the way back in 21. This would mean that rather than seeing the Antichrist introduced in verse 36, “the king will do as he pleases,” we may find a detailed description of the Antichrist beginning from verse 21. Now for clarity, I do believe that Antiochus is very strongly prefigured in verses 21-35, but as we now see, the Antichrist is the ultimate subject of this section of Daniel. If the angelic exposition of those texts means anything to us, we really have no other choice but to see it as such.

THE OLIVET DISCOURSE

The angel's interpretation also does much to shed light onto the Olivet Discourse. In Matthew 24:15, Jesus also references “the abomination that causes desolations as described by the prophet Daniel” and places it in the future. So Jesus also didn't

believe that that Daniel 11:31 was ultimately about Antiochus either. Yet ironically, many Christian commentators attempt to apply Jesus' words to Titus and the events of 70 A.D. But as we have already seen, this is impossible. The angels made it abundantly clear that the abomination of desolations and the ceasing of offerings will take place in the context of (1) the final 3.5 years, (2) at the time when the Jewish people go through a time of unparalleled suffering, (3) to be followed by the resurrection of the dead. And (4) it is also specifically referred to twice as "the end times." Not surprisingly then, the remainder of Jesus' discourse in Matthew 24, as well as Mark 13 and Luke 21, involves events that would take place at the end of time just before his return, and not in 70 A.D.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, for anyone who simply pays heed to the angelic interpretation of Daniel 11, the obscuring fog of Preterism will be cleared away, and the future, end time context of the passage will become crystal clear.

Beyond this, when we recognize the fact that the three angels do not identify the individual who sets up the abomination of desolation described in 11:21-45 as Antiochus Epiphanes, but as the last days Antichrist, then we also recognize that the career of the Antichrist is described in far greater detail in this portion of Daniel than most commentators have commonly assumed. As I said at the beginning of this article, the implications of this interpretation, if true, are absolutely stunning.