

**How Long Will This Last: Hopeful Knowledge for Weary Hearts**  
Daniel 11:36-12:3

*"But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book."*

**Introduction:** We have reached both the unthinkable and surreal, a time of governmental reach never experienced in our lifetime with no end in sight. From a pastoral perspective, more conversations have been had with friends, church members, and family than ever before regarding how to think, what to do, and what to make of everything going on. More masking, forced vaccines, and quarantining are now regular and accepted, but it has all turned the dial of heat and angst up among most people. This time has contributed to friends (who I would not think were typically prone to this) **thinking suicide, anxiety** over future choices, and **unsettled anger** among even the most calm and mature. This all begs a most important set of questions for all of us: *how long will this last and where do we cling to hope.*

Last week we looked at a prophecy given to Daniel about end things which actually were all part of our past history, from Cyrus, to Alexander, to Ahasuerus, to Antiochus III (or Great), to Antiochus IV Epiphanes. In this we saw that the **raging of the nations was futile**, and though governments, dictators, and kings may have their time to demonstrate their power, all of their plans came to ruin, could not last, and even the wicked and vile things they did were accounted for. We were reminded that all of history is about **God's glory, Him working out His redemptive plan among the nations, and reconciling those He's called through Jesus Christ**. History is truly His Story, and it is moving to a sure and complete end. God is in complete control of all things, even those that go against Him and His nature, and somehow He uses the suffering and persecution of His people to accomplish His will (i.e. The suffering of Jesus Himself). God has called those that follow Him to a **yielded life of faith, of turning our back on self-trust and worldly comfort to rest and treasure Christ completely**. This is difficult when things are crashing around us, but next to impossible when everything is simply status quo.

Now, let me ask this question: *how would your mindset be different if you knew all of COVID would go away in 6 weeks? 6 months?* Or what if we knew Christ would rapture us in the next year, setting the stage for His return? Would that change the way you hope, or would it motivate you differently to get up tomorrow morning? Knowing the future is something we all wish we could see and know, whether overtly or subtly in our thinking. *Why do we want to know what will happen tomorrow or next year so badly?*

- **Curiosity** - We just want to know, since knowledge is power. This curiosity helps quell our anxiety about the future. It's why I'm the kind of guy that likes to read the end of the book or know the outcome of the movie before I read it or watch it.
- **Control/Fear** - But most times we want to know the future to maintain a semblance of control because we are often driven by fear. **Anxiety** is often brought on by not knowing what **tomorrow holds** (will I feel ok tomorrow? Will plans work out?) or by not knowing what will happen in general (*will my kids turn out ok? what is the future outcome for our country? Is California still a viable place to live?*). Fear is a powerful tool used in the hands of many to actually control others, and when we are **afraid of the unknown** we are not only unsettled in the present but we are easily controlled. The reality is that we **cannot control the future**, and any desire or attempt to do so will only lead to depression, misery, hopelessness, and anxiety. *Our view of the future will be a tremendous indicator of our true, honest, and real faith in God and His plan.*

- **Confidence** - God does not keep us in the dark, however, about the future, but gives us **exactly what we need to live a full, vibrant, effective life in any and every circumstance**. Now He rarely gives the information of the future we WANT (when is the date? Who are the players? etc.) because He desires that we will live by faith, but He gives us everything to **stay calm, joyful, and settled**. This is the nature of the final part of this final vision given to Daniel. God is truly **uncommon and uncompromising**, since He not only does what is unexpected, but can be wholly trusted in everything He promises.

As we map out these verses, we will be introduced to: 1) **A World Ruler**, 2) **World Religion**, 3) **World War**, 4) **Great and Unparalleled Tribulation for Israel**, 5) **Deliverance of the Righteous**, 6) **Resurrection of both righteous and wicked**, 7) **Reward for God's own**. Each of these is coming in the future, and we can bank on its reality.

#### Character of a Rising World Ruler (36-39)

*"And the king shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done. He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women. He shall not pay attention to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all. he shall honor the **god of fortresses** instead of these. A god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts."*

**Who is this guy?** There is a huge gap in between verse 35 and 36, and this has lead to considerable debate. Some believe the person portrayed at the end of chapter 11 is an extension of Antiochus IV, even though he died in 163 B.C. and in no way fits the description of the events laid out. This NEW king is one we've already seen in Daniel (7:19-27; 9:26-27), would be one from the 10 horns of Rome, would make a covenant with Israel but then break that covenant in the middle of the 70th week. This is someone **still to come**, but one that is **parallel** to Antiochus in how he treated Israel and his contemptible character.

- **His ego** - He will exalt himself and magnify himself, and will be willing to say any level of heinous things about the God. He will prosper, and it will seem that whatever he sets out to do, he does. He will be a flatterer, but as any prideful leader, will inspire confidence in those who follow him. The recipe is always the same: a powerful personality and orator who is full of themselves waits until there is a crisis, points to himself as the solution, and people will follow under any kind of false security. This has happened in nations historically and churches recently. But we remember that God is **OPPOSED** (not just dislikes or upset with) to the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6). Every expression of pride and ground gained because of it will ultimately be lost.
- **His religion** - He will be an "atheist", meaning he will not worship the gods of his fathers or pay attention to any other god, since he himself will be **self-magnified**. He will also pay no attention to "the *desire of/for women*" (11:37), meaning he would reject either the home or the natural function of men and women. Not only would he reject "religion", but would fight against the institutions God established. BTW, haven't we seen in our culture how one who would be part of the LGBTQ+ culture or someone who declared they had no regular sexuality be lauded rather than distrusted? The "god" of his religion will be **war**. The irony is he will be seen as one bringing peace, but his true god will be **fortresses** (38). He will deal with the strongest fortresses with his foreign god, or the might of his hand. This is inevitable for every egotistic, controlling dictator. Preach peace but ultimately put people under their thumb with threats of and actual carrying out of force.

- **His power** - He will consolidate power through **reward**, giving to those who support him honor. Agree with him, and you will prosper. Stand in his way, and feel his wrath. Again, this is a recipe for every world power, but this **one** will have the backing of world powers, Satan's minions, and God's will to carry it all out. But what stops him? **"He shall prosper until the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done."** (36) He will have success only until the **wrath of God is delivered, and will only thrive as long as God wills.** We remember that Dan. 7:26 says he will be consumed and destroyed to the end after his dominion will be taken away. This "King" will only have a short time to magnify himself.

#### **Conflict and Oppression on a World Stage (40-45)**

*"He shall deal with the strongest fortresses with the help of a foreign god. Those who acknowledge him he shall load with honor. He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price. **At the time of the end the king of the south shall attack him, but the king of the North shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships. And he shall come into countries and shall overthrow and pass through. He shall come into the Glorious Land. And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites. He shall stretch out his hand against the countries and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the precious things of Egypt, and the Libyans and the Cushites shall follow in his train. But news from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction. And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain. Yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him.**"*

Now, in verse 40, the vision brings us to "the time of the end", highlighting the last days/years of the reign of this King, "man of lawlessness" (2 Thess. 2:3-12), the "beast" (Rev. 11-20), and the Antichrist (1 John 2:18). What is described is parallel to the Ptolemy and Seleucid battles that took place from the North and South of the land of Israel. Here, we have battles that take place on a world stage and most likely include coalitions of nations in the south and north. There is debate as to whether the King of the north IS the same KING, or whether there are three kingdoms represented. We will take the latter view (though again, not dogmatically). Also, it would seem that this battle is the same battle as laid out in Ezekiel 38-39, just from a different perspective.

There is a campaign started by the "king of the south" (40) moves against the KINGS coalition, setting up a clash between north and south, with all kind of modern warfare apparatus. In this battle Jerusalem is destroyed (Zech. 12:2) and the armies of the N. confederacy are destroyed (Ezek. 39; Zech. 12:4). This prompts the KING to enter into Jerusalem (41) and conquer the territory, except for Edom, Moab, and Ammon who escape. As he moves into Jerusalem, he gets news of territories from the East and North are moving, and he responds in fury to destroy his enemies (Rev. 16:12; Dan. 11:44). He then moves his headquarters into Jerusalem and assembles his armies there. (Dan. 11:45).

This all sets the stage for what is known as the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:16), which will take place literally on the plain of Megiddo, a place north of Jerusalem that sets up perfectly for an all out battle of the nations. It is here that the KING will meet his end .

Just like Antiochus, Antichrist will meet his end and demise quickly. What at one point seemed like an unstoppable force will meet the immovable object of Christ, who will exercise justice and bring an end to the evil regime. But remember, this will come AFTER much persecution of God's people and terrible times on the earth. The next section maps out not only the time of tribulation, but also when true **deliverance will come.**

### Consummation of World Events (12:1-3)

*"At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of great trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above, and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever."*

Now, although the Antichrist will meet his end, the time that was just described will be unlike the world has ever seen. It will be a time of loss, wrath poured out, war, famine, suffering, and death. This will particularly be a time of purification for God's people, the Jews, as He draws to Himself a remnant.

- **Tribulation like the world has never seen before** - Here is what Jesus had to say about this time:

*"So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains...For then there will be a great tribulation such as not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short...Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."*  
(Matt. 24:15-16, 21-22, 29-30)

In Rev. 12:7, Michael goes to battle with the dragon in the heavens, with the result of the defeat of Satan and casts him down to the earth, which is the cause of so much trauma on the earth. Zech. 13:8 says that 2/3 of those living Jews will perish, but many will be saved. This will entail the final part of God's purification process and judgment on His own people with the result that many Jews and non-Jews will be saved at this time through the ministry of the Two Witnesses (Rev. 11) and the 144,000 (Rev. 14), those from every tribe of Israel. Before deliverance would come the most treacherous and difficult time the earth has known, and though God's people have always been persecuted throughout the ages, this will outpace them all. But the brightest day comes right before the darkest of nights.

- **Deliverance for the faithful** - Deliverance would come in the form of **final salvation**, not just in earthly justice, as the emphasis here are those whose names are written in the book of life. This reminds us that the **ultimate deliverance God offers His people is from sin through forgiveness**, not always temporal change. Salvation is the gateway to enjoying future blessing, including living in a literal kingdom with Christ. But note here that deliverance came in the form of **resurrection**.

Revelation 20:4-6 and 11-15 talks about 2 resurrections. The first has to do with those that were martyred during the Tribulation period (20:4), those who had been beheaded and did not worship the beast, his image, or take his mark. This resurrection followed the first fruits of Christ's resurrection (1 Cor. 15) and the Rapture of His church (1 Thess. 4:13-18). This will be followed by a final resurrection after the 1000 year reign of Christ on the earth (Rev. 20:5, 12). The books will be opened and those whose names were written in the book of life will live, but those before the Great White Throne whose names were NOT in them will be judged, ultimately thrown in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15). This will take place in **bodily form, will be eternal, and even the torment of unbelievers will be in bodily form**.

It's good to **pause right here**. The whole point of judgment on the earth was to punish the wicked but also to for God to draw to Himself His own. There will be those, even in the end, who stubbornly hold onto their own life, will, and perceived independence and will not yield to Him. This is incredibly telling and speaks to us today.

Far too many have simply added Jesus to their life, have added morality and a Christian culture to their life, but have maintained **control and held onto self-authority**. We like what Jesus offers, but do not like the cost of following Him. This was the essence of the Rich Young Ruler, who was ok with Jesus morally, (Mark 10:17-31), but did NOT WANT TO GIVE UP WHAT WAS PRECIOUS TO HIM, his wealth and prosperity. So he left Jesus disappointed, and unsaved. During this time where our **control is being taken away, what is being revealed about what we truly believe about Jesus**. Is He nice to have around or is He LORD? Is He and add-on or the source of life, joy, rest, treasure, and hope? This is a question all of us must answer this morning, and no amount of emotional plea or fear of judgment will sway you. You must decide today: are you going to **yield yourself completely to Christ, confessing your sin, asking for forgiveness, and following Christ no matter the cost, or are you going to continue in your own strength and own way**. This may seem extreme but far less than standing before the judgment seat and finding out our name is NOT written in the book. Give up control, look to Christ, and receive life eternal that delivers us from our sin and ultimately the evil of this world.

- **Reward for the righteous** - Finally, there was the promise of **great reward** for those who were/are faithful, and those who were part of drawing others to righteousness. This is what Jesus referred to in **Matt. 13:43**, *"Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let them hear."* Note that this reward will be **sure, future, and part of a future kingdom**.

Daniel received this vision that stretched into near history to the end of the world. This was not only given by way of **surety and assurance**, to purify, but also to instill **confidence and courage**. Jesus will reign and rule, and the future is secured in Him, so any and all suffering we face will only be temporal, only in this life, only for a time. That should help us deal with our **anxiety, fear, and lack of hope**. **A confident life in Jesus will be effective, joyful and fruitful**.

I'm reminded of the WWII naval captain named **Earnest Evans**, who at the age of 36 led the Destroyer USS Johnston and the small ships of Taffy 3 against a vastly larger, more powerful battle group of Japanese battleships, heavy cruisers, and destroyers. This was the last, decisive naval battle of WWII at the Battle of Leyte Gulf, where Japan was hoping for a victory that would buy them time to train new pilots and air crews.

Evans said this as he took command of the Johnston, *"This is going to be a fighting ship. I intend to go in harms way, and anyone who doesn't want to go along had better get off right now."* Faced with impossible odds in their tin can ships (only 3/4 inches of steel armor, they were outweighed 37 times by one Japanese battle ship). As they faced off with the daunting force, some claimed Evans said, *"A large Japanese fleet has been contacted. they are 15 miles away and headed in our direction. They are believed to have 4 battleships, 8 cruisers, and a number of destroyers. This will be fight of overwhelming odds from which survival cannot be expected. We will do what damage we can."* These lightly armored tin cans ended up sinking a number of cruisers and destroyers and literally saved all but one of their smaller flattops (small aircraft carriers) at the cost of their own ships and lives. They went headlong into the battle, knowing the odds, believing victory would be had.

Some would say these young, brash captains were foolish since they easily could have lost ALL their ships and the battle. They could have run. They could have fled when they were injured. But they fought because of the **hope of victory**. **We don't have to operate with**



blind hope, we have assured hope. We know the end, and it is sure. We know hard is coming, even before the events of Daniel 11 and 12. So we move forward with confidence and courage, we trust that no matter what happens to us, we want to live in yielded trust, in radical obedience, and settled hope. Now is not the time to shrink back. Now is the time to move forward on our mission.