

Daniel 11:36-12:13**The King Who Exalts Himself**

³⁶ “The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place. ³⁷ He will show no regard for the gods of his ancestors or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all. ³⁸ Instead of them, he will honour a god of fortresses; a god unknown to his ancestors he will honour with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. ³⁹ He will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign god and will greatly honour those who acknowledge him. He will make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price.

⁴⁰ “At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. ⁴¹ He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. ⁴² He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. ⁴³ He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans and Cushites in submission. ⁴⁴ But reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many. ⁴⁵ He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

Daniel 12:1-13**The End Times**

12 “At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. ² Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. 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. ⁴ But you, Daniel, roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.”

⁵ Then I, Daniel, looked, and there before me stood two others, one on this bank of the river and one on the opposite bank. ⁶ One of them said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?”

⁷ The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, “It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed.”

⁸ I heard, but I did not understand. So, I asked, “My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?”

⁹ He replied, “Go your way, Daniel, because the words are rolled up and sealed until the time of the end. ¹⁰ Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.

¹¹ “From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. ¹² Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.

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.”

Sermon: “Enduring to the End”

Please have your Bibles opened up at **Daniel chapter 11** – starting at verse 36 and we’re going through to **Daniel chapter 12, verse 13**. And we’ll very briefly mention the New Testament reading from **Hebrews 10:36-39**.

There is an outline if you would like to take some notes!

Let me **pray** first...

Context – The Final Enemy (11:36-45)

Before we take our final look at the book of Daniel.

Let's just get the **context** of where we are up to.

[Slide-Context]

Last week in Daniel chapter 11 – vv21-35 there was a description of a **wicked Greek King** who we identified from the history books as **Antiochus IV Epiphanes** – who around about 167-168BC – being threatened by the Romans – took his frustration out on Israel – and he did the most despicable things.

He desecrated the temple in Jerusalem; stopped daily sacrifices for sin, set up an altar for the Greek god Zeus; sacrificed pigs in the temple; stopped the people of Israel from worshipping on the Sabbath; stopped circumcisions and forced the Jews to eat pork.

He basically wanted to completely eradicate the Jewish culture and religion all together [a bit like Hitler].

But we said that God raised up a Jewish leader called **Judas Maccabeus** who led the **Maccabean Revolt** [167-164BC] and eventually overthrew Antiochus IV – and then the temple was restored and rededicated.

Still today, the Jews celebrate this event each year with the festival of **Hannukah**.

In our passage this morning – verses 36-45 of Daniel 11 – it seems to describe Antiochus IV Epiphanes again; but when we look closely, we see that some of the details don't quite fit; and actually, what is being described is a **future king** (future even to us); and this King will do similar things to Antiochus but worse.

He will exalt himself above any God (v36)

He will have no interest in other gods but himself or have any desire for women (v38)

He will honour the god of fortresses (v38) – in other words waging war and power will be his way of making himself god!

He will be just like Antiochus and invade the Beautiful Land – Israel (v41) - and pitch his tent on the beautiful holy mountain – Jerusalem (v45).

It's like the description of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in vv21-35 is a mirror and foreshadow or are a 'scale model' of the final opponent of God's people described here in vv36-45. This final scourge for God's people will be like what Antiochus IV Epiphanes did; only more and worse!

[Slide-Context]

We are meant to see this King (in vv36-45) as God's final enemy, the **Antichrist**, described by the Apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2 as a *man of lawlessness*.

The description of this king in Daniel sounds a lot like 2 Thessalonians 2:4 when Paul describes a 'man of lawlessness' in the end times as someone who: *will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.*

We see in v39, if people acknowledge him, they will be rewarded; that's how he sucks people in! His world dominance and international conquests are described in vv40-44 and his "**end**" in verse 45 is welcomed by those crushed under his regime. Over the centuries – people have speculated who this final Antichrist figure is.

During the time of the Romans – Christians thought that emperor Nero was the Antichrist or one of the other Roman emperors.

During the time of the Protestant Reformation in the 1500s – Protestants thought the Pope was the Antichrist – and the Catholics at the time thought Martin Luther was the Antichrist.

In the last 100 years – people have said that the Antichrist was Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Mikael Gorbachev, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton.

What we have in Daniel 11 is not only a picture of God's final enemy, the **Antichrist**, but we're meant to also see, this description as **a pattern of evil that repeats over and over throughout history**; as the Apostle John describes in 1 John 2:18 – *Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.*

So not only is the Antichrist to come, but John says there are many antichrists (like Nero, Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, Putin and so on).

So, with this description in our minds of a **final evil King** – we are going to look at – in a bit more detail - what will happen during the time of this final king – and that brings us to Daniel chapter 12.

(pause)

When people ask me if I want the good news or the bad news first – I don't know about you, but I like the bad news first – get it over and done with – so I can enjoy the good news.

So, I have two points this morning

[Slide-Summary points]

1. The Bad News – We can expect **suffering**

2. But the Good News is – We can also expect **victory**

So as promised **the bad news** first – **we can expect suffering...**

Bad News - We can expect suffering (Daniel 12:1-13)

[Slide – Bad News]

V1 – This Anti-Christ figure will bring '*a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then.*'

Jesus spoke of this time in Matthew 24:21 (also Mark 13:19) and He says: ***For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equalled again***

World War I was described as the war to end all wars!

But then we had WWII which was worse – and in our time there have been the Korean War, Vietnam War, the Gulf War – and we have two major wars going on now - in the Ukraine and in Israel.

But Daniel and Jesus are saying – there's something much worse to come!

And V10 tells us that during this time of distress – although *many will be purified, made spotless and refined* because they remain faithful to God – at the same time *the wicked will continue to be wicked. And the wicked won't understand* that this is a time to turn back to God – and they will just continue being sucked in by this Antichrist figure and continue in their wickedness.

It's a bit like Jesus' parable of the wheat and the weeds (Matt 13:24-30) where both the wheat and weeds grow together until harvest and then they are pulled up separately. In the same way the believers and the non-believers will grow together during this time of distress. And then there will be a harvest of judgment.

During this terrible time of distress, the Antichrist figure will – v11 – abolish the daily sacrifice and setup the abomination of desolation. He will basically stop proper worship – and it will be a terribly difficult for believers to worship God and Jesus – without it being at great personal cost – and without there being great suffering! It's a terrible terrible time in the future!

As Daniel – in verse 5 - is looking at the man dressed in white linen at the river telling him this vision of the future – two other angelic men -turn up - on opposite sides of the river and one of them asks a question – v6 - that would certainly be on Daniel's mind: *“How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled”* I'm sure the people living through WWI and WWII – asked the same “how long” question?

I'm sure the people of the Ukraine and Gaza and Israel are asking that “how long” question right now?

And I'm sure we'd all want to know – if we were going through the worst time of distress in the whole of history – we'd want to know how long?

The angelic man dressed in linen – v7 – raised his hands towards Heaven and swore an oath before God – and said this time of distress will be *‘for a time, times*

and half a time' – which many see as 3 ½ years. We'll come back to that time period in a minute...

But basically – if we're still alive when this final Antichrist figure turns up – the bad news is we can expect great suffering indeed!

(pause)

But thankfully there's some **good news**.

That's my second point – **the good news is – we can also expect victory.**

[Slide-Good News]

Good News – We can also expect victory (Daniel 12:1-13)

Look at V1 –the good news is - Michael the archangel – who is the protector of God's people – which we learnt in chapter 10 (10:13, 21) – Micheal will arise.

It seems Michael is specifically the protector of Israel – and I expect he's pretty busy today with what's going on in Israel. Remember we said a couple of weeks ago – when there are battles/wars on Earth – there are spiritual battles/wars in the spiritual realm at the same time!

And there's more good news in v1 – ***everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered.***

And how do we know if our name is written in the book? (Philippians 4:3;

Revelation 3:5; 13:18; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27)

John 3:16 tells us: ***whoever believes in Jesus shall not perish but have eternal life.***

And Jesus tells us in John 5:24 says: *Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.*

Bottom line – it's a rock-solid guarantee – if you repent of your sins and believe in Jesus death for the forgiveness of your sins - and you believe in Jesus' resurrection you have eternal life – AND - your name is in the book!

There's more good news in verse 2 – at the end of this time of distress – there will be a resurrection – believers will have everlasting life (Heaven) and unbelievers (wicked) will have everlasting contempt (Hell)

V3 – more good news – *those who are wise* – that is those who believe in Jesus – *will shine like the brightness of Heaven* – and there's even more blessings on those who lead many to righteousness – in other words there's a blessing of being *like stars forever* for those who tell others about Jesus and lead them to righteousness!

(pause)

At this stage of the vision – v4 - Daniel is told to *roll up and seal the words on the scroll* – **the seal** means it's authenticated and approved by God – **the rolling up** means it's secret and protected because the end of time is not clear and no one knows the time of the end. The end of v4 suggests some people won't be happy with not knowing when the end is and they *go here and there trying to increase*

their knowledge of the end times. We see this today – where people waste hours and days trying to calculate when Jesus is coming back.

But remember Jesus said He doesn't know the day and the hour – and that means He doesn't know the year either? So why would anyone think they know something even Jesus doesn't know?

Instead of speculating and wasting time – we could be telling people about Jesus!

Despite being told to roll up the scroll

The man clothed in linen – v7 – does give an answer to the “how long” question – and as we said – “it will be a time, times and half a time” – which is often interpreted as 3 ½ years.

Is this literally 3 ½ years?

Unlikely!

In Apocalyptic literature we have to be careful of taking numbers literally.

If God's number is 7 and 7 is a complete time, then 3 ½ is saying that **God will cut short the suffering and persecution and it won't go on indefinitely**; which is also what Jesus says in Mark 13:19-20 about this terrible time of distress that Daniel's being told about – Jesus says - **those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now—and never to be equalled again.** ²⁰ **“If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them**

So, the good news and simple answer to the angels question of ‘how long?’ is it will be **a limited time that is cut short.**

And according to v7 – there's a break through moment when '*the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed*'

In other words – those believers who are alive at the time of this great distress are almost at breaking point and feeling like there's no hope – when suddenly the 'time, times and half a time' is up and God acts and steps in – and sends Jesus to judge the living and the dead.

It's a bit like a soccer game - there's one minute to go – your team is down 1-0 – and wham bam – two goals in the final minute – and your team wins – Good News - Team God always wins!

But we have to sympathize with Daniel in v8 – He's *heard* all this stuff but he *doesn't understand*. I think we've all felt like that after studying Daniel for the last 12 weeks or so!

So of course – Daniel wants to know "*what will the outcome be?*"

Will evil win? Will good prevail?

And I like the way the angelic man dressed in linen – in v9 – basically says – 'go away Daniel, roll up and seal the words – it's nothing to do with your time – the vision is about the end of time?'

But in God's grace – Daniel does get some sort of answer

And it's more good news in v10

During this time of distress – there will be many who are purified, made spotless and refined – these are faithful believers who have endured and not given up – and there's many of them!

Not only is Daniel told that many will endure but he's also in v11 – given an idea of a timeline of this suffering.

V11 says – once this Antichrist figure abolishes the daily sacrifices and sets up the abomination that causes desolation – in other words when the Antichrist figure stops proper worship and sets himself up to be worshipped instead of God – there will a time period of 1290 days.

And 1290 days happens to be roughly 3 ½ years again.

That limited time of suffering that is cut short

And there's more good news in v12

People are blessed if they can wait on the Lord and persevere for 1335 days – 45 days more than 1290 days - because if they do that – then they have outlasted the 1290 days of suffering – and they are sweet!

And v13 brings us to the end of the vision that Daniel is given and to the end of the whole book!

And it finishes with some amazing, good news

Daniel is to go about his business until the end.

Then he will rest

And at the end of his days – he will rise to receive his allotted inheritance.

It's a promise of inheriting eternal life in Heaven

That promise applies to us!

We can expect a victory – it's guaranteed!

How do we know it's a **guaranteed inheritance** – the Apostle Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1:3-5:

*³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into **a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,** ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.*

Response (Hebrews 10:36-39)

[Slide-Response]

In the meantime, our NT reading from Hebrews 10:36-39 is our **response** [Please turn there now]

V38 - ***We need to persevere so that when we have done the will of God, we will receive what he has promised***

And v39 - ***But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.***

Let's pray

Heavenly Father, we thank you for being sovereign and that you know the beginning and the end and every detail in between.

Even though we know there is a terrible time of suffering ahead – we also know that in your grace and mercy, that time of suffering will be cut short – and we can expect a victory because of Jesus – and we can expect deliverance and resurrection

and everlasting life in Heaven. In the meantime, help us to persevere, knowing with confidence we will receive the crown of life as you promise!

Benediction (James 1:12)

¹² Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. Amen.